Studies on the NEOPLATONIST HIEROCLES

Ilsetraut Hadot

Translated from the French by Michael Chase

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Preface

The Neoplatonist Hierocles, who lived in the fifth century A.D. and taught at Alexandria, has not yet received his due place in the history of Neoplatonic philosophy; or, rather, he has not found any place at all. Most modern works that try to sketch an overview of the history of one or all of the Neoplatonic doctrines leap from Porphyry and Iamblichus to Syrianus and Proclus, without mentioning Hierocles. However, the attentive study of the fragments of his treatise in seven books *On Providence* and of his commentary on the Pythagorean *Carmen aureum* provides us with many important details on the development of Neoplatonic doctrines between Iamblichus and Syrianus-Proclus, knowledge of which would have spared some scholars some rather considerable errors. For instance, there is the fairly recent affirmation that a characteristic of the so-called Athenian Neoplatonism consisted in the tendency to wish to harmonize the various theological traditions with each other, whereas we can plainly read in the extracts that Photius has preserved for us of the *De providentia* that the fourth book of this treatise "wishes to harmonize with the doctrines of Plato what is called the Oracles proper, the *Chaldaean Oracles*, and the literary institutions," and that the fifth book "attributes to Orpheus and to Homer and to all those who were famous before Plato appeared, the philosophical theory of Plato on the subjects dealt with above."[1] The texts from Hierocles thus show that this harmonizing tendency existed before the Neoplatonists taught at Athens, and goes back, in all probability, already to Iamblichus.

I therefore think it is useful to publish an updated and slightly abridged English translation of my previous work on Hierocles, published in various places,[2] which allows Hierocles' median position in the history of Neoplatonic philosophy, between Iamblichus and Syrianus-Proclus, to emerge.

The notes contained in this book are rather numerous, which is nowadays frowned upon by editors. Nevertheless, they are indispensable. They enable the quotation and translation of most of the principal texts

[1] I. Hadot (1978; 1979, 1990b, 1993, 2002, especially pp. 321–327).
[2] Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 214, p. 172a Bekker, vol. III, pp. 128sq. Henry.

of Hierocles, and especially of other authors, which are necessary in order to situate Hierocles at a precise point in the history of Neoplatonism. If these important texts are placed in footnotes, it is with a view to the clarity of my exposition; in this way, the continuity of the exposition is not interrupted, and the material necessary to back it up is not lacking.

I thank with all my heart my colleague and friend Michael Chase, who has carried out the translation with all his competence as a classicist and as a scholar.

CHAPTER 1

Biographical Elements

Few details of the life of the philosopher Hierocles are known to us. In his treatise *On Providence*, Hierocles introduces himself as the faithful disciple of Plutarch of Athens, the Platonist, or as we are now accustomed to say, Neoplatonic philosopher. The Platonic diadoch Plutarch of Athens died in 431 or 432 at a very advanced age, approximately two years after the young Proclus arrived in his school. This date supplies us with a *terminus ante quem* for dating Hierocles' studies under Plutarch. In addition, Damascius, in his biography of his master Isidorus, the Platonic diadoch who succeeded Marinus, speaks of Hierocles as someone no longer alive. Now, the *Life of Isidorus* was written at the time of the reign of Theodoric the Great in Italy,[1] and therefore between 497 and his death in 526. Here is the extract concerning Hierocles from Damascius' *Life of Isidorus* as preserved by Photius:[2]

> "He was a pupil of Hierocles, who addressed studies at Alexandria with his clear-cut mind and sublime eloquence, possessed, together with his consistency and trustworthiness of diction, an extreme abundance of thought. As he was distinguished by his lucid style of speech and the abundance of the prettiest nouns and verbs, he also wove his discourse in a fitting way with admirable consistency, using with the richness of language and the wealth of thought of Plato. Thus Hierocles was accustomed to explaining Plato's doctrines to the members of his school, and Diosce-

Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 214, p. 173 a 17 Bekker, vol. III, p. 130 Henry (cf. below, the text cited in p. [illegible]).

Marinus, *Vita Proclus*, 12, vol. II, 21 Saffrey and Westerink, [illegible], [illegible].

[1] Damascius, *Vita Isidori*, 64, p. 94, lin. 11 Zintzen = Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 242, 340a 15–18 Bekker, vol. VI, p. 23 Henry, tr. vol. V, Albany 1977.

This statement is to be related to the supposition that Damascius wrote this work while he was already head of the School of Athens, which is probably after 486 (Sophie Athanassiadi, cf. P. Henry, 1956).

Damascius, *Vita Isidori*, 58, p. 80 Zintzen = Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 242, 338b28–339a37 Bekker, vol. VI, p. 18 Henry, tr. vol. V, Albany 1977.

> bius, one of his auditors, wrote down his explanation. When, as is normal, after some time, Hierocles came to explain the *Gorgias* for the second time, the same disciple wrote it down, and when we compared the first comments with the second, he found not a single nothing identical to them, although — and this seems incredible — each one followed Plato's intentions as closely as possible. This, then, indicates how immense was the vigour of this man's intelligence.

From this passage, then, we learn that Hierocles taught at Alexandria at some point in time, and that he taught there long enough to be able to take up a second series of explanations in a part of or all the dialogues of Plato contained in the Neoplatonists' program of study. We should also note the laudatory tone of the entire passage. This does not prevent Damascius from situating Hierocles at a fairly low level in the hierarchy of the various Neoplatonic virtues: Hierocles, like Aristotle and Chrysippus, did not achieve a result of great importance with regard to the great wisdom that is worthy of a goal, or process aspired to by he with the problems situated in the domain of that which is mortal and human.[7] In other words, Hierocles, like Aristotle, Chrysippus, and other philosophers of the same tendency, remained at the level of civic virtues.[8] The *Suda* transmits another passage about Hierocles, taken from the same work by Damascius, it must have followed Photius' summary, which we have just quoted, fairly closely:

> Hierocles' courage and high ambitions, however, were demonstrated by the misfortune that happened to him. For when he went up to Byzantium, he offended the party in power, was dragged into court, and was beaten to pulp by the blows of rods [cf. Aeschines, *De Fals. Leg.*, 64]. Covered with blood, he plunged the corpse he found and his own blood and sprinkled the bridge with it, saying: "Hence, cyclops, drink this wine now that you have eaten human flesh" [cf. Homer, *Od.*, 9, 347]. Condemned to exile, he later returned to Alexandria, where

[6] [illegible]

[7] [illegible]

[8] On the Neoplatonist virtues, cf. L. Holder, 2001, pp. LXXVII-s.

> he studied traditional matters with his disciples.[7]

This text shows us the attitude of the pagan philosopher Hierocles during the persecution led by the Christians at Constantinople, a situation in which he kept his cool in a way Damascius found admirable. Damascius also states with satisfaction that Hierocles, even after these bitter experiences, continued imperturbably to teach traditional—that is to say, pagan—philosophy at Alexandria, without compromising. The *Suda* text on Hierocles ends as follows:

> One may get an idea of the magnanimous wisdom of Hierocles by reading the treatises he wrote on the *Golden Verses* of the Pythagoreans and in numerous other books. In these works the man appears, with regard to his "mores of life," as well-learned character, but lacking precision with regard to philosophical notions.[8]

Damascius thus enumerates as Hierocles' written work the two treatises we still know today—the commentary on the *Carmen aureum*, which we possess in its entirety, and the treatise *On Providence*, of which we have a few traces in two summaries by Photius.[9] We will see in subsequent chapters that these two treatises, insofar as their doctrinal content is concerned, are consistent with the trend of post-Iamblichean Neoplatonism, but they do not set out all the characteristics that characterize Neoplatonism under Proclus, and even later under Damascius. This is what Damascius means when he says that Hierocles was not exact with regard to philosophical notions.

R. Henry[10] mistakenly attributes to our Hierocles a work on Apollonius of Tyana, but the author in question is another Hierocles, also a pagan, who lived two centuries earlier, under the reign of Diocletian, and whose work is known to us through the polemics of Eusebius of Caesarea. In his dialogue *Philopatris*, Aeneas of Gaza[11] distinguishes two Hierocles: one of them, the pagan philosopher who taught at Alexandria, is presented merely as the professor of some of the three char-

Damascius, *Vita Isidori*, in Zintzen, p. 85, 5–11 (Zintzen, p. 85 [illegible] Alexandria).

[7] Zintzen: Neoplatonists refers to [illegible] spiritual, or, in the words of Henry, *Ad Claudianum*, p. 115, "[illegible] aspect of [illegible]." Damascius also applied [illegible] Syrianus and Proclus, for [illegible] cases where the term "[illegible]" is used [illegible] Damascius, *Commentaire*, p. 106, p. 85, 12–15 (Zintzen, p. 85 [illegible] Alexandria).

[8] Photius, *Library*, cod. 214, vol. III, pp. 125–130 Henry (cod. 251, vol. VII, pp. 189–206 Henry).

[9] Photius, *Library*, vol. III, p. 125 Henry, [illegible].

[10] On this work, cf. A. Nogués, 1903, 1904.

acters of the dialogue, and here to be identified with our philosopher. He is called Hierocles the professor (φιλόσοφος), to distinguish him from an author of marvelous stories, [illegible] about whom it is difficult to say if he is the same as the Hierocles mentioned by Eusebius. Hierocles does not appear in this dialogue by chance, for it is indeed against him, or rather against his treatise *On Providence*, that the *Theophrastus* seems to be directed. However, since Hierocles was already dead at the time,[illegible] and philosophical instruction in Alexandria was on the decline, [illegible] the principal pagan interlocutor is a certain Theophrastus, probably a fictitious personage, depicted as one of the last pagan philosophers who are condemned to wander alone, with no school or fellow students, seeking out a limited, strictly private audience here and there. In any case, Aeneas of Gaza refutes the principal arguments of Hierocles' treatise *On Providence* point by point, at the same time as he makes a clear distinction between the various stages Platonic doctrine went through down to Serapis and Proclus.

The treatise *On Providence* was dedicated to a certain Olympiodorus, who distinguished himself in Roman embassies and had "brought many very mighty barbarian nations under obedience to the Romans."[illegible] The identification of this Olympiodorus has been a frequent topic of modern study, without any certain results having been achieved.[illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

CHAPTER 11

Hierocles' Ideas on the History of Platonic Philosophy

I hope to have demonstrated elsewhere,[1] while refuting the views of Praechter,[2] that in the commentary on Epictetus' *Manual*, Simplicius' theology, or his doctrine of first principles, by no means corresponds to a doctrinal tendency peculiar to the school of Alexandria, but rather reflects the doctrines of the school of Athens, in particular those of Proclus and Damascius. In this same commentary by Simplicius, we find a theory of providence that is very close to that of Hierocles. Following Praechter, could we not recognize in Hierocles' doctrine on providence a typically Alexandrian doctrinal tendency that was then taken over by Simplicius?[3] On this view, Hierocles, in his doctrines concerning the creation of the world, providence, and the destiny of the soul, departs from the tendency of the Neoplatonic philosophy of his time, and takes up the theses of Middle Platonism, which are even tinged with Christianity.

However, if we subject Hierocles' doctrines on the history of Platonic philosophy, on matter, the Demiurge, the soul, and providence, to a careful analysis, we shall discover that these theories are not, any more than the theology of Simplicius, evidence of the anachronistic survival of the theories of Middle Platonism or of Ammonius Saccas, and that they do not depart from the overall evolution of Neoplatonism.

1. *Photius' Summaries of Hierocles' Treatise On Providence*

Let us begin with the careful examination of the two summaries of Hierocles' seven books *On Providence*, which we owe to the zeal of Photius. We can leave aside the beginning of the first summary, in codex

[1] In I. Hadot, 1978, chaps. III and VII, reprinted in I. Hadot, 2004a, pp. XIV-X
[2] K. Praechter, 1912
[3] K. Praechter, 1927

214 , in which Photius is only concerned with the personality of the treatise's addressee, and read the text starting from 17 b 33:

> The declared goal of the present investigation is to deal with providence, by examining the doctrine of Plato and that of Aristotle. The author wishes to bring the two thinkers together, not only on their theories on providence, but also on all the points on which they concerned the soul's immortality, and on which they have philosophized on the heavens and on the world. As far as all those are concerned who have set these authors at odds with one another, he explains at length that they have been greatly mistaken, and that they have departed as much from the intention of the two thinkers as from the truth, some willingly, because they have offered themselves up as victims to their quarrelsome temperament and their foolishness; others, because they were the slaves of a preconceived opinion and of their ignorance. He adds that previous authors failed in interpreting clearly, and there shine forth the wisdom of Ammonius, who, here (he emphatically, was nicknamed "the pupil of the gods". It was he, he says, who restored the doctrines of these two ancient philosophers to their purity, abolished the foolishness that had accumulated on both sides, and showed the agreement between the thoughts of Plato and those of Aristotle concerning the important and most necessary doctrinal questions.

Let us note two important points. First, Hierocles adopts the hypothesis of doctrinal agreement between Plato and Aristotle, a hypothesis that was almost universally accepted in the Neoplatonic school after Porphyry. Secondly, Hierocles designates a certain Ammonius as the restorer of this agreement. We learn who Ammonius is meant at the end of Photius' first summary, where he gives a glimpse of the structure of Hierocles' treatise. Let us continue to follow Photius' account on the order:

> His work is divided into seven books. The first consists in the exposition and a thorough investigation of the exercises and investigations before, immediately providence, power, and the independent will descend upon us according to the merits of our actions; the second, in gathering together the Platonic opinions on narrower questions, seeks to confirm them on the basis of Plato's very writings; the third

[1] For passages from codices 214 and 251, the translation is based on that by R. Henry, vol. III, pp. 120-121, and vol. VII, pp. 159ff. This translation has sometimes been modified.

presents the objections that could be used against these opinions, and seeks to refute them. Moreover, he wishes to set what are called the Oracles, and the hieratic traditions, in agreement with Plato's doctrines; the fifth attributes Plato's philosophical theses on the above subjects to Orpheus, Homer, and all those who were ancients before the appearance of Plato; the sixth takes up all the philosophers after Plato, taking Aristotle himself as the most eminent, until Ammonius of Alexandria, whose most remarkable disciples were Origen and Plotinus. After Plato, then, and up until the men we have just mentioned, he takes up all those who have made a name for themselves in philosophy, and he shows that they all agree with the doctrine of Plato. All those who have tried to break the unity of views between Plato and Aristotle, he ranges among the mediocre, and those who should be considered with horror, who have altered many aspects of Plato's works, even as they proclaimed him to be their master. The study of the works of Aristotle, on the part of those who identify themselves with his school, all their maneuvers have had no other goal than to find ways to set the Stagirite and the son of Arisarchos odds with one another. This work with book starts from a different angle, as it deals with the doctrine professed by Ammonius, Plotinus and Origen, and also Porphyry and Iamblichus, as well as their successors – all those who, according to him, are born of a sacred stock – as far as Plutarch the Athenian, who he says was the Master who taught him these doctrines; all these concur with the philosophy of Plato in its pure state.

We can thus see that this work was a treatise on providence, which could claim to give a complete outline of the question, from both the dogmatic and the historical points of view. With regard to the first phrase: it cannot be decided with certainty whether the phrase ἐν ἑκθέσει διατάσεων ought to be understood as meaning a complete exposition of Hierocles' doctrines, or merely a "propatheutic," or preliminary overview of the contents of the entire treatise, as I would tend to understand it in the light of the analyses that A. Elter[1] carried out on codices 214 and 251 of Photius' *Library*.

As a function of these two interpretative possibilities, we may imagine that the second book set forth the Platonic doctrines in detail, or else demonstrated them, in both cases based on texts by Plato. Needless to say, we must understand by "Platonic doctrines" the theses clab-

[1] A. Elter, 1915. According to this scholar, the structure of the first book of Hierocles' treatise was the following: doctrines of Pythagoreans, Stoics, Peripatetics, and Epicureans; the second book contained the main treatise; consolations to Lampsakos, and brief summaries of the contents of the books.

oriented by the Platonic school, in its uninterrupted exegesis of Plato's writings. More precisely, thanks to what Photius tells us of the seventh book of Hierocles' treatise *On Providence*, we can affirm that, for Hierocles, these "Platonic doctrines" corresponded to the contemporary trend represented for him by Plutarch of Athens. These were the theses that Hierocles sought to corroborate by citing the works of Plato. For an example of this apropos procedure, which the Neoplatonists used very often, it suffices to read, for example, chapter four of book two of Proclus' *Platonic Theology*, where the author confirms his thesis that the One is the first principle beyond the Intellect by citations with commentary from Plato's *Republic*, *Sophist*, and *Philebus*. The few extracts that Photius gives us from the second book of Hierocles' treatise (codex 251) also allow us to recognize the procedure in question, but in a highly abbreviated and mutilated form.

After setting forth the Platonic theses on providence and demonstrating their conformity with the teaching of Plato, there followed, in the third book, the refutation of his adversaries. Needless to say, such a refutation once more implied setting forth and confirming Hierocles' own doctrines. Thus, Photius' summary (codex 251) has preserved for us extracts from Hierocles' response to those who deny the existence of free will in man. In this response, Hierocles sets forth all his arguments in favor of his own thesis, most of which had already been collected in the *De fato* of Alexander of Aphrodisias.

The description of the contents of the fourth book contributes a very important element. What Photius calls τὰ ἐν χρησμοῖς λεγόμενα, nothing other than the famous *Chaldean Oracles*, and the expression τερατουργοὺς θεσμούς designates the theurgic institutions — in other words, theurgy, a method of access to the divine that included ritual and mystical practices. If Photius had wished to speak of the oracles of Delphi or of other such prophecies, he would not, it seems to me, have used the phrase ἐν χρησμοῖς λεγόμενα, but would have written simply ἐν χρησμοῖς. In any case, the presence of the two terms together in the expressions τὰ ἐν χρησμοῖς λεγόμενα and τερατουργοὺς θεσμούς, which were so characteristic of the Neoplatonists of Hierocles' time, excludes, in my opinion, any possibility of giving another meaning to the phrase. We know that the Neoplatonists from Iamblichus on attached a great deal of importance to proving the conformity of the theological system of the *Chaldean Oracles* with the system of Plato. We also know that Porphyry still

[illegible] Hierocles' *Commentary on the Golden Verses* was [illegible] (ed. E. H. Lowe, 1878, Facsimile I, p. 44). According to this source, [illegible] were written in the second half of the second century of our era.

maintained a fairly reserved attitude toward the cult practices linked with the *Chaldaean Oracles*, and that it was under the influence of Iamblichus that theurgy, as well as the term τελετικὴ ἀγωγή, were introduced into the tradition of the Neoplatonic school.[illegible] It, therefore, Hierocles, in the fourth book of his treatise *On Providence*, tried to prove Plato's agreement with the *Chaldaean Oracles* and with theurgical practice, then he is to be ranged among the partisans of Iamblichus, and he uses a procedure that he could not have found among the exponents of Middle Platonism. This is amply confirmed, moreover, in the commentary on the *Carmen aureum*, verses [illegible], where Hierocles declares that the τελετικὴ ἀγωγή is an indispensable complement to theoretical philosophy.[illegible]

The fifth book, Photius tells us, dates Platonic philosophy as far back as Orpheus, Homer, and others who were famous before Plato. We encounter this systematic effort at assimilation in the commentaries of Proclus, but also, very clearly, in the commentaries by Hermeias on Plato's *Phaedrus*. We shall discuss more examples of this later on. As far as the *Chaldaean Oracles*, the *Orphica*, and Neoplatonic doctrine are concerned, Proclus had elaborated a concordance between these three systems, a synopsis of which we may find in H. Lewy's book on the *Chaldaean Oracles*.[illegible] Proclus may have been the first Neoplatonist to

[illegible] H. Lewy, 1956, p. [illegible]; Hierocles, *In Pythag.* [illegible], p. [illegible]: Wesselinus: "Sunt plusquam philosophi divinitus [illegible] Orpheus, Linus, [illegible] and many other philosophers, others philosophers, [illegible] Pythagoras, Plato, and all the others."

Hierocles, *In Pythagorea carmina*, XXXI, p. [illegible]: "Hierocles demonstrates that the rational soul [illegible] is provided by [illegible] Hierocles, [illegible] and can be provided by theurgy, [illegible] only one deity exists. [illegible] of leading the blessed [illegible] Iamblichus, *De myst.* I, 12–41, 12, p. 42: "[illegible] the soul of which [illegible] Hierocles, [illegible] p. 45: "[illegible] of the *Chaldaean Oracles* [illegible] practitioner of the *Chaldaean Oracles* and [illegible] Hierocles, chap. III, sect. 5: "Hierocles."

According to [illegible] Hierocles more [illegible] followed rather orthodox theurgy. [illegible] with Proclus [illegible] Hierocles [illegible] disciple of Plutarch of Athens. W. [illegible] p. 47[illegible] that he had written [illegible] Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato, and the *Chaldaean Oracles*.

Lewy, 1978, *Excursus* VII, pp. 481–485.

furnish a wealth of material on this subject, but neither he nor his master Syrianus was the first to make such an exhaustive attempt at harmonization; this is proved by the commentary of Hermias and Hierocles' treatise *De providentia*. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that a systematization of such breadth could have been carried out before Iamblichus.

The sixth book reviewed all the philosophers who came after Plato, starting with Aristotle, the agreement of whose thought with that of Plato was also demonstrated. The result of this investigation was that all the partisans of the Platonic and Aristotelian schools who had believed they saw doctrinal differences between Plato and Aristotle—and there were many until the time of Ammonius[16]—had to be either declared to be forgers or else dismissed as merely envious. This Ammonius, says Hierocles, had as his most famous disciples Plotinus and Origen, and it was thanks to his influence that the truth was definitively victorious. Obviously, the person in question was Ammonius Saccas.

With the doctrines of this Ammonius, Photius tells us, Hierocles made a new departure in his seventh book, and he asserted that the philosophical tendency in the Platonic school, which took as the basis of its interpretation the agreement in thought between Plato and Aristotle, flourished up until his master Plutarch of Athens, passing through Plotinus, Origen,[17] Porphyry, and Iamblichus. With regard to Plutarch of Athens, Hierocles tells us explicitly that it was he who taught him these Platonic doctrines in their purified form, which was due to the reforming genius of Ammonius of Alexandria. The role of Ammonius Saccas is also mentioned in another passage from Photius' second summary.[18]

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[16] See above, p. 10, the second part of the first passage from Photius.

[17] K.-O. Weber (1962) has convincingly proved, despite the objections of F. H. Kettler (1979), that we must distinguish between the Christian and the Pagan Origen, although his work in part requires revision on a number of points of detail; and on Ammonius see P. Hadot (1980). The Origen mentioned by Hierocles is the Pagan.

[18] Photius, *Library*, cod. 251, pp. 461a24ff. Bekker = vol. VII, p. 191 Henry: "Many Platonists and Aristotelians had devoted their zeal and study to setting their respective masters in conflict with one another, with regard to their principal doctrines. They carried their love of dispute and their audacity to such an extent that they even falsified the writings of their own masters, in order better to demonstrate that the two men did not agree. And this sickness, which had struck philosophical teachings, lasted until Ammonius, the pupil of the gods (*theodidaktos*), filled with enthusiasm for the philosophical truth, and despising the opinions of the majority, who were inflicting the greatest dishonor upon philosophy, was the first to purify it and to understand the thought of the two philosophers, and brought them to a single consensus. And he transmitted philosophy, untroubled by factions, to all his disciples, but first and foremost to Plotinus and Origen, the best of his students, and to all their successors."

2. *The Development of Platonic Philosophy According to Hierocles*

This brief summary of the seven books of Hierocles' *On Providence* informs us that Hierocles had a specific historical view of the development of Platonic philosophy. Plato's philosophy, itself interpreted as a revelation, was understood as a meeting point and at the same time the first culminating point between the revelations prior to Plato's time (traces of which are found in the *Orphica*, in the philosophy of Pythagoras, and in the poetry of Homer and Hesiod, with the results being identical to the later revelations, the *Chaldaean Oracles*), and later philosophy up until Ammonius, represented exclusively by the disciples of Plato, that is, the Platonists together with Aristotle and his school. The philosophies of Plato and Aristotle were considered as concordant in everything having to do with the doctrines on the soul, the heavens and the earth, and providence. After Aristotle, there began a period of divergence in the interpretation of Plato and of Aristotle: a great number of the philosophers of both schools denied the agreement in the thought of their respective masters. Yet Ammonius succeeded in putting a definitive end to all these false interpretations and to the arbitrary falsifications of the two works, so that after him the true Platonic philosophy was restored to its state of purity until the days of Hierocles, and no one doubted the agreement between the thought of Plato and of Aristotle any longer.

On the subject of this history of Platonic philosophy, we may start by making the following two observations.

First, the historical overview that Hierocles gives of the development of the Platonic school implies Hierocles' adherence to a philosophical system that is typically Neoplatonic, and even late Neoplatonic. The contents of books four and five, with their systematic incorporation of the *Chaldaean Oracles*, theurgy, the *Orphica*, and such divinely inspired priests as Homer, presuppose a degree of development of the Neoplatonic system that was reached only between Iamblichus and Proclus, and thus corresponds perfectly to the philosophy of Hierocles' time.

So far, consequently, the summary has not contributed any elements that allow us to doubt, as Praechter nevertheless does, the truth of

Praechter, 1913, col. 1481–1482: "When, according to Phot. 172 b 28, Hierocles claims the authority of Plutarch, Origen, Porphyry, Lamblichus, and the other Neoplatonists [illegible] as Plato's [illegible] for his doctrine of providence and [illegible] unreasonable. Historically, the [illegible] post hoc, ergo propter hoc by the authority [illegible] school. No doubt, in the part of his work which [illegible] with the [illegible] of Proclus." Praechter is followed by R. Beutler, 1931, col. 962.

Hierocles' affirmation that he adheres to the Platonic doctrines which his master Plutarch of Athens had taught him.

The doctrine of Plutarch of Athens, who was also the master of Syrianus and—albeit briefly—of Proclus, is virtually unknown to us from elsewhere. Beutler[ ] and especially Lyvard[ ] have tried to detach him from the evolutionary direction that Neoplatonism had taken with Iamblichus, and they have brought him closer to Porphyry, by attributing to Plutarch—hesitantly, to be sure—the *Anonymus Taurinensis*, which has since been attributed to Porphyry himself by P. Hadot.[ ] Of all the other arguments that Lyvard brings up to prove that Plutarch was not influenced by Iamblichus, but rather adhered to the theological sources of Plotinus and Porphyry, none seems valid to me. Moreover, we know today, thanks to the work of H. D. Saffrey and L. G. Westerink,[ ] that the Neoplatonism of Iamblichus may have become established within the Athenian schools in the mid-fourth century. Here I will limit myself to giving the conclusions at which Saffrey and Westerink arrive after a meticulous examination of the historical details. "Plutarch of Athens, these authors tell us, no doubt initiated by Priscus and Iamblichus II, and drawing directly at the very source of the works of the 'divine Iamblichus,' was the first scholarch resolutely to enter into the Neoplatonic current. Thus, together with his disciple and successor Syrianus, he was worthy of being considered as the founder of Neoplatonism at Athens."[ ] It is therefore not surprising to find traces of the doctrine of Iamblichus in Hierocles' historical overview. We will see later on at the examination of the various doctrines on providence that Photius attributes to Hierocles leads to the same results.

Before that, however, we must deal with some difficulties raised by Hierocles' presentation of the history of Academic thought. It might be thought surprising that, for Hierocles, the renewal of Platonic philosophy coincides with the general and hitherto uncontested acknowledgement of the agreement between the thought of Plato and of Aristotle, and that this phenomenon should be linked to the name of Ammonius rather than to that of Antiochus of Ascalon or of Porphyry. (Ammo-

Beutler, "Plutarchos von Athen," col. 962–975, especially col. 964–1968.

Lyvard, 1980.

P. Hadot, 1968, I, 102–143, [illegible] 2, 111–113. Anonymus Taurinensis has been further discussed by [illegible], M. Tardieu [illegible], P. Hadot [illegible], L. Brisson [illegible] has attempted to [illegible] Middle Platonism to Porphyry. Introduction [illegible], which [illegible] P. Hadot's conclusions to Porphyry.

H. D. Saffrey and L. G. Westerink, [illegible] I, 75 ("Scolarque d'Athènes au IVe siècle").

H. D. Saffrey and L. G. Westerink, [illegible] VI–VII, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1968, pp. 54–55 [illegible] interpreting and [illegible] scholarship upon which the philosophical traditions of Eunapius of Athens [illegible] pp. 21–54).

ochus of Ascalon, we know from Cicero that he was the first Academic resolutely to affirm the unity of doctrine between Plato and Aristotle. As for Porphyry, he is known for having written a treatise in seven books entitled *On the Unity of the Doctrine of Plato and of Aristotle*, and we know that after him, and only after him, this conception became traditional in the Neoplatonic school. Why does Hierocles mention the name of Ammonius in this context? First of all, if Hierocles names Ammonius, that does not necessarily imply, as Theiler would have it, a personal knowledge of Ammonius' teaching, which knowledge would have come down to him through intermediary sources. We can just as well, and with still greater likelihood, propose other hypotheses. For instance, the following, which is perhaps not the only probable one, but which is one of the possible explanations: in his historical account, might not Hierocles simply be following Porphyry's treatise *On the Unity of the Doctrine of Plato and Aristotle*? Might it not be Porphyry himself who designated Ammonius Saccas as the first upholder of this thesis, in the same way as he had elsewhere mentioned this same Ammonius, the master of Plotinus, as the author of a very important dogma concerning the soul's union with the body? In addition, Plotinus himself, according to Porphyry, took the teaching of Ammonius as the foundation of his philosophy. It would have been difficult for Porphyry to attribute to Plotinus himself a doctrine according to which the teachings of Plato and of Aristotle were identical, for Plotinus' *Enneads*, which Porphyry himself had edited, contained sharp criticisms by Plotinus against Aristotle. Porphyry must therefore have restricted himself to pointing out a *de facto* agreement between the philosophical systems of Plotinus and of Aristotle, and to defending by this means his thesis of the unity of the Platonic and

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Suda, s.v. [illegible]; cf. R. Beutler 1953, col. [illegible].

In the second half [illegible]

W. Theiler, 1966, p. [illegible]

Cf. H. Dörrie, 1959, pp. [illegible]

Cf. Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 3, [illegible]; 14, [illegible] Henry-Schwyzer.

Cf. P. Hadot, 1974, [illegible]; English version in R. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed*, London, 1990, pp. 125–140 [illegible]

Aristotelian doctrines. Yet he could not have attributed to Plotinus an active role in the tendency toward harmonizing the Aristotelian and Platonic doctrines; apparently, therefore, Ammonius was more suitable for such an interpretation.

As far as Antiochus of Ascalon is concerned, he no longer counted for much among the Neoplatonists. A comparison between the descriptions of the history of the Academy found in the fragments of Numenius' treatise *On the Academy's Deviation from Plato* and in Augustine's *Contra Academicos* reveals the purely negative role that the tradition of the Platonic school attributed to Antiochus of Ascalon: he was considered a traitor, because he had dared to introduce Stoic dogmas into the teachings of the Academy.[1]

Thus, Hierocles is, it seems, a witness to a period of Neoplatonism (Porphyry, Iamblichus, Plutarch of Athens), in which the unity of the doctrines of Plato and of Aristotle was an article of faith, and in which the paternity of this rediscovery was attributed to Ammonius. As we have seen, other features of his account of the history of Platonism allow us to situate Hierocles still more precisely: they presuppose a degree in the development of Neoplatonism that was achieved only between Iamblichus and Proclus. This will be confirmed by the following chapter.

[1] Numenius, fr. 28 des Places; Augustine, *Contra Academicos*, III, 19, 43.

CHAPTER III

Hierocles' Philosophical Ideas on Matter, the Demiurge, and the Soul

1. Photius' Summaries Concerning the Demiurge and Matter

We now move on to examine the various doctrines of Hierocles himself, as reported by Photius, following as much as possible the order observed by Photius in his summaries. Photius tells us:

> In conformity with Plato, his research establishes the preexistence of a god who is the demiurge of the entire cosmic order, [illegible] both visible and invisible, which the artisan, he says, produces without any subsistent [illegible] his will alone was enough to bring beings into existence. From corporeal substantialization [illegible] incorporeal creations, out of these two a perfect world-[illegible] is constituted, which is at the same time double and one.[1]

With this text, we must compare the following extract, which Photius gives us in his second summary, and which is textually almost identical:[2]

> Plato, he says, establishes the preexistence of a demiurgic god [illegible], who governs the entire cosmic order [illegible], both visible and invisible, which is not produced from any preexisting subsistent [illegible] his will [illegible] him to bring beings into existence. From corporeal [illegible] united with incorporeal creations, out of these two a perfect world-[illegible] is constituted, which is at the same time double and one.

[1] Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 214, 172a22ff. Bekker, vol. III, p. 126 [illegible]

[2] Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 251, 461a9ff. Bekker, vol. VIII, p. 192 [illegible]

The first phrase of this and the preceding [illegible] is a literal quotation of Plato, *Tim.* 47c. "Indeed, the world-order, World-Soul, place, time, [illegible] the outworkings of reason, necessitated mechanics [illegible] Hierocles. However, intelligence dominated necessity [illegible]. Nous was a god identified with

Finally, we quote a third parallel text:[1]

> Wherefore, do I enunciate these ones probable Perspectives for you, when there are even Platonists who have conserved a base opinion of the creator gods? For they did not think him capable of bringing the world into existence by himself alone, thanks to his own power and wisdom, arising from all eternity [illegible]. But they thought he could only create with the help of an unconsidered matter [illegible], by realizing that nature [illegible] which had not been brought into existence by him, all things were [illegible] potential. [illegible] this unformed matter [illegible] sparks [illegible], whereas he, so to speak, only painted them in different colors, placed them in order, and separated them from their base form.

[1] Marius Victorinus, *Adversus Arianos*, Book 1, Neoplatonic, Discourse Notes Perspectives

With these passages, clearly directed against Middle Platonists like Plutarch of Chaeronea and Atticus, we are in the presence of a doctrine according to which matter is engendered eternally. Among the Neoplatonists, the word *perpetuo*, may take on a twofold meaning: first of all, it can signify that something is caused, by a superior principle, outside of time and, that it is caused and participates in time, that is, that it belongs to the world of becoming. We see from the distinction made by Proclus a bit later between the two parallel lectures of the

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

word ἀγένητος,[1] which refer to matter. For him, matter is "ungenerated" with regard to time, but "engendered" with regard to its cause; that these two interpretative possibilities were known to him, and that he approved of them. This detail is not unimportant, but Praechter neglects it completely. He thinks that Hierocles abandons the doctrine, universally accepted in Platonism, affirming the coexistence of two principles (God, Matter) or three principles (Ideas, God, Matter)—a doctrine that Neoplatonism conserved while admitting, on the basis of an opposition between the demiurge and matter, a certain dualism beneath the One.[2]

In fact, however, Praechter confused two different problematics. It is true that Neoplatonism contains a kind of dualism that opposes the demiurge and matter, but this dualism is described within a monism that is more fundamental, since all the Neoplatonists since Porphyry admit that matter proceeds from the One. In his commentary on Plotinus' treatise [illegible] to [illegible], Porphyry had drawn the final consequences

[illegible]

[illegible] Praechter, "Hierokles," col. 1492.

from the monistic system of Plotinus, by making matter a hypostasis of the One.[13] Plotinus himself, to judge by his writings, had not given as clear a solution to this problem. It was probably under the joint influence of the *Chaldaean Oracles*,[14] which called matter *ὑπερουσία*,[15] that Porphyry reached this interpretation. But the *Chaldaean Oracles* were not the only authority to which Porphyry referred. We know from the testimony of Simplicius that Porphyry also relied upon the Pythagoreans to justify his doctrine. According to Porphyry, Moderatus the Pythagorean reported that the Pythagoreans, followed by Plato, were the first of the Hellenes to conceive of matter as ungendered.[16] Simplicius cites Moderatus, through the intermediary of Porphyry, as follows:

> And here is what Porphyry writes in the second book of the treatise *On Matter*, citing in his text the words of Moderatus: "The Unity, the proposition for every [sic] the One that functions as a proposition, [sic], wished, as Plato says somewhere, to constitute the generation of beings from itself, detached quantity from its proximity, thus having deposited in it all the proportions and forms which it possesses. This was called quantity without form, without division, and without figure, but which nevertheless receives form, figure, division, quality, and all analogous things."[17]

It is interesting, as A.-J. Festugière remarks,[18] that Iamblichus refers in his treatise *De mysteriis* to the same doctrine of Moderatus, while

[13] [illegible] with the Eleatics and others. "Matter [illegible] without [illegible] [illegible] Plotinus, *Enneads*, [illegible] which the [illegible] Plotinus's book [illegible] which [illegible] Plotinus's book [illegible] understood, [illegible] the principle must be [illegible] [illegible] Plotinus, 1970, p. 450). [illegible] parallel propagation probably [illegible] from Porphyry, cf. Johannes Philos., *De aeternitate*, 1888, p. 178, 511 Wimsch, and Dr. W. Theiler, 1964, p. 17.

[14] [illegible]

[15] Johannes Philos., *De aeternitate*, 1888, p. 178, 5 Wimsch, and Psellus, *Hypotyp.*, [illegible] *Philosophica Graeca Medaevalia*, p. 28.

[16] Simplicius, *In Phys.*, p. 230, 34ff. Diehl, [illegible] Hadot, 1985, I, p. 166.

[17] Simplicius, *In Phys.*, p. 231. An English translation is also given by A.-J. Festugière, 1944–1954, 4: 36, [illegible] chapter, [illegible] "The One which transcends the Dyad [illegible] A.-J. Festugière, [illegible] Iamblichus's treatise *On the Mysteries* [illegible] the same doctrine, pp. 39–40. [illegible] Simplicius, [illegible] p. 184, 79, where he presents the same doctrine of the Pythagoreans, according to Eudemus.

[18] Festugière, 1944–1954, 4: 39–40.

attributing it to the Egyptians. The two texts resemble one another down to the Greek terms which Festugière has carefully compared. Here is the text:

> Thus, from on high and the ultimate things, the discourse concerning the principles, for the Egyptians, begins from the One, and proceeds to multiplicity, and the many, again, are governed by the One, and everywhere the indeterminate nature is mastered by some determinate measure, and the highest, unity, cause of all things. As for matter, God produced it from substantiality by separating the materiality off from below. The Demiurge took this matter, which is overflowing, in hand, and from it he distinguished the simple, incorruptible spheres, and with the extreme residue that remained, he fabricated engendered and corruptible bodies.

Later on, we shall have to specify the meaning of the last lines of this text, which allude to the role of substrate played by matter in the work of the demiurge. For the moment, let us say that this doctrine of engendered matter, of which we possess the first traces within Platonism in Eudorus of Alexandria[illegible] that comes to us, but which was vigorously attacked by Numenius[illegible] and Atticus,[illegible] remained in effect until the end

[illegible] Empedocles, *Fragment* [illegible] (p. [illegible]) [illegible] translation cited in the text by Festugière, [illegible] Vol. 4, p. [illegible] [illegible] Festugière [illegible] the text of Stobaeus, [illegible] [illegible] the same [illegible] Hermes wishes [illegible] and indeed [illegible] Matter.

[illegible] Plotinus, [illegible]

Numenius, [illegible] p. [illegible] [illegible] the Pythagorean doctrine [illegible] which [illegible] the case of matter [illegible] indeterminate [illegible] In other words, [illegible] and this, since [illegible] understood [illegible] even [illegible] grasped the power of [illegible] unclassified and also pushed [illegible] matter [illegible] appearance of the [illegible] which restores disappearance and the [illegible] and that a transformation takes [illegible] of the moral [illegible] susceptibles [illegible]

[illegible] Plotinus, *Enn.* [illegible] [illegible] several quotation

of the Neoplatonic school.[1] Proclus, in his *Commentary on the Timaeus*, not only maintains this doctrine personally, but he transmits to us, in great detail, the arguments by which Porphyry defended this thesis, confirmed it by Platonic texts, and refuted the contrary opinions of the Middle Platonist Atticus.[2] We are justified in supposing that Hierocles also ranged Atticus among the Platonists who had maintained a false doctrine about the creator god, and whom Photius' report leaves anonymous.

The difference between the doctrines of the Middle Platonists Plutarch of Chaeronea, Numenius, and Atticus, on the one hand, and those of the Neoplatonists beginning with Porphyry, on the other — for the moment, we leave Hierocles outside the discussion — is as follows. The two groups distinguish two matters, or rather two states of the same matter: a state in which it is largely or completely indeterminate, and another state in which it is ordered by the demiurge.[3] For the Middle Platonists Plutarch, Numenius, and Atticus, by contrast, indeterminate matter is unengendered in both senses of the word: both outside of a cause and outside of time, it is as old as the demiurge.[4] In other words, it is not engendered *by* a cause, but is a substrate or receptacle for the work of the demiurge.[5] Moreover, it is the cause of evil, rather in itself, or by virtue of the evil soul that moves it.[6] At most, they admit that *de*

[1] A. Longo, *Anima*, p. 256–264, 267–[illegible] Dodds.

[2] Proclus, *In Tim.* vol. I, p. 383, 40 (Diehl, French translation in Festugière, Paris 1966–[illegible]).

[3] [illegible] Porphyry designated this [illegible] by the terms [illegible] (cf. Simplicius, *In Cat.*, p. 89, [illegible] Kalbfleisch).

[4] For the Middle Platonists, [illegible] Proclus claims [illegible] which is [illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.* vol. I, p. 387, [illegible] Proclus calls it [illegible] Porphyry, *In Tim.* [illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.* p. 388, 2–[illegible] Diehl. [illegible] Porphyry [illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.* [illegible] Simplicius, *In Cat.*, p. 15, 17–[illegible] Kalbfleisch.

[5] [illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.* vol. I, p. 382, 12–[illegible] Diehl, French translation in A. J. Festugière, Paris 1966–[illegible].

[6] This is the [illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.* vol. I, p. 245, 24–[illegible] p. 247, [illegible] Diehl, French translation in A. J. Festugière, Paris 1966–[illegible].

[illegible] Plutarch, Numenius and Atticus, according to Proclus, *In Tim.* vol. I, p. 382, 10 (Diehl).

determinate matter may be said to be engendered, because it has a beginning. For the Neoplatonists beginning with Porphyry, by contrast, even indeterminate matter is engendered, because superior to the demiurge, but outside of time. This allows Proclus to say that this indeterminate matter is just as much engendered (given that it is the first substrate impressionable relative to the work of the demiurge). Thus, for the Neoplatonists, the demiurge merely receives, as it were, a matter that has already been provided to him; but since this matter derives ultimately from the same cause as the demiurge himself, it cannot be opposed to the demiurge as good is to evil. Matter is not foreign to the demiurge, but is in a certain sense immanent within him. Besides, since the demiurge is the closest cause, as far as the creation of the cosmos is concerned, the Neoplatonists may speak of the demiurge in terms that may give someone unfamiliar with the entire ontological background of their philosophy the impression that, for them, the demiurge was the one and only cause of the universe and of its constituent elements. Their system allows them just as much to say that the One produces matter as that the demiurge produces it, and the only difference between these two generative causes — which they often do not bother to explain — consists in that the One produces matter in a primordial sense, and the demiurge produces matter in a derived sense.[1]

i. Proclus vs. Porphyry: Are Even Indeterminate Matter and Evil Engendered?

We have seen that both a Neoplatonist like Proclus, and the Middle Platonists we mentioned, could conceive of matter as a substrate impressionable for the work of the demiurge, albeit in a different way.

[1] Cf. the quotation from Simplicius, [illegible]

[2] [illegible]

[3] For instance, Proclus [illegible] would [illegible]

[4] Proclus [illegible] [illegible] the very first time [illegible] Accordingly, [illegible] also Evil, the Demiurge is the cause of Matter, even [illegible]

For the latter, matter is a substrate in the sense of a thing that exists by itself, and it preexists the work of the demiurge; whereas for the Neoplatonists beginning with Porphyry, matter is a substrate that has neither existence nor preexistence, but only potential existence. I quote Simplicius, who cites Porphyry:

> Porphyry says that Plato affirms that the non-existent (*mēdeis*) also exists, but that nevertheless it exists (*mainei*) being that-that-exists (*tou ontōs ontos*) in the idea, and that the latter is the matter-sense (*hylōdes*), but that the highest and primordial matter (*prōtē hē ousiōdestatē*) exists-not-being (*mē on*), which is unqualified and without form (*aneidōlos*) [illegible] which is everything (*panta*) exists, or rather exists, but does not belong in this way among beings. Considered in itself it is all things potentially, but not one in actuality (*mēdeni tōn ontōn*) [illegible]

Another difference between the Middle Platonists enumerated above and the Neoplatonists beginning with Porphyry — for the moment, we shall continue to leave Hierocles out of the debate — consists in the fact that the former understand the cosmogonic story of the *Timaeus* as expressing a temporal succession, so that it was at a certain moment that the work of the demiurge, the cosmos, was created. The Neoplatonists, by contrast, understand it as a discourse "that theoretically separates the work produced from productive agent, and that makes a totality which necessarily coexists, come into being successively and within time — since all that is created forms a well-linked system."[illegible] I quote Porphyry again, after an Arabic source:

> Porphyry says in his *Letter to Anebo* — with regard to what Plato is accused of by you — that it is, that he attributed to the world a beginning

Simplicius, *In Phys.* [illegible], p. 153, [illegible] Porphyry, fr. 134, p. 139, [illegible] 140, [illegible] Smith.

[illegible] *Arguments and Arguments* [illegible] *Text* [illegible] p. 181, 24, which is translated by Dominic and [illegible] *The Neoplatonists* [illegible] p. 19, n. 6, and Blumenthal, "Neoplatonism" [illegible] *Supp.* [illegible] 671, 18–19. See also Middle Platonists, [illegible] 134–164, 12–6, p. 12. Whittaker, however, the *Timaeus* stories of [illegible] the [illegible]

[illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.* [illegible] I, p. 382, 30–[illegible] that the translation of Isnagoge Proclus approximates the version of the ideas of Plato's handed down in Porphyry and Iamblichus.

[illegible] Porphyry, [illegible] *Nūr al-Sabāt*, [illegible] II, pp. 357–358 [illegible] Jabir al-Mounir. Despite the [illegible] Arabic [illegible] VIII, Sudanese Press, p. 118, attributes the passage to Porphyry [illegible] Sodate the source's explicit [illegible] *Dialogue*, VIII, 2, p. 269, [illegible] Parisi, [illegible] p. 193, [illegible] Plotinus [illegible] that such subjects were dealt with in Porphyry's *Letter to Anebo*.

> ning without time—that is, for Plato did not think the world had a temporal beginning, but a beginning with regard to a cause, and he also affirms that the cause of its existence is eternal. He also thought that those who concoct arguments against Plato when he said that the world was created, that it came into being out of nothing, and that it passed from disorder to order—these are wrong, for it is not always true that every kind of non-being precedes being, in the case of those beings which exist because of their being a something other than themselves, not natural beings, or disorder precede order. Plato merely maintains that the creator caused the world to appear out of not being, and that he brought it into existence. It is always true that it does not exist by itself, but that the cause of its existence comes from the Creator.[1]

The second part of Porphyry's argument thus refutes those among Plato's interpreters (Christians) who upheld something equivalent to the Christian thesis of creation *ex nihilo*. For Porphyry, there can be no question of the world being born from not-being. The world, in so far as it is engendered and has the cause of its existence outside itself, belongs itself to a certain form of not-being. By contrast, the demiurge, or cause that engendered it, belongs to the class of beings that are truly beings, because they contain the cause of their existence within themselves. According to the point of view of a Neoplatonist, then, the creation of the world does not take place from not-being but, on the contrary, from those things that are truly beings, among which is the immediate cause, the demiurge. However, when they referred to the One, the supreme cause, which is not being above being and which precedes the true beings in the order of causality, the Neoplatonists could also say that the world derives from not-being, albeit indirectly, through intermediary causes. It, with regard to the parts of the corporeal creation of the sublunary world, which is no longer the direct work of the demiurge, a Neoplatonist could speak in a certain sense of creation from not-being, because the matter from which these corporeal parts originate itself represents a possible existence, or a certain category of not-being. This has once again nothing to do with the creation *ex nihilo* of the Christians. These elements are eternal, for they "continually change into one another, assume the matter that is their substrate," and the corruption of one signifies the birth of the other.[2] This is the doctrinal background of the phrase "for it is not always true that every kind of not-being precedes being

[1] Porphyry, in al-Shahrastani, *Hikayat al-Falasifa* (ed. Nallino), p. 352, l. 12 (Arabic text). Moreover, cf. Simplicius, *In Phys.* (ed. Diels), pp. 1360, 34–1361, 1; p. 1177, 26–27 (Diels).

in the case of those beings that have the cause of their being in something other than themselves.[72]

The two texts from Porphyry on which I have just commented show clearly that, with regard to the doctrines on the creation of the world, the Neoplatonists from Porphyry on were as clearly distinct from Middle Platonists like Plutarch, Atticus, and Numenius as they were from the Christians.

4. For Hierocles, as for the Neoplatonists, the Demiurge Creates Matter: [illegible] Preexisting Matter Does Not Exist [illegible]

Where can we situate Hierocles with regard to the problem of the creation of the world? We have seen that he sharply criticizes the doctrine of unengendered matter, which had been upheld by some Platonists—whom Photius does not name, but whose teachings, in its broad outlines, identifiable with that of Plutarch, Atticus, and Numenius. Hierocles describes matter according to these Platonists as being unengendered in both senses of the term: that is, outside of a cause, and outside of time. It is unengendered in the same sense as the demiurge; it preexists the work of the demiurge in a disorderly state, and is set in order by the demiurge at a moment of time. Matter as Hierocles conceives it, on the contrary, is engendered outside of time, by a cause.[73] It does not "preexist" prior to the demiurge's work, either in the temporal sense or in the ontological sense. This becomes clear from Hierocles' polemics against the theses of the Middle Platonists, where, moreover, he utilizes elements of arguments that had been developed by Porphyry, and that were later constantly reused.[74] It is true that most Christians also denied the

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[72] For a complete exposition of Porphyry's doctrine on the modes of being and of non-being, cf. P. Hadot, *Porph.*, I, 147–178.

[73] Photius, *Library*, cod. 251, p. 461b22 Bekker, vol. VII, p. 189 Henry, text quoted above, p. 16.

[illegible] quoted above, p. 22. [illegible] Neoplatonists [illegible] (Photius, *Library*, cod. 251, p. 461b25 Bekker, vol. VII, p. 189 Henry).

[74] See Porphyry's criticism of Atticus' [illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.*, vol. I, p. 391,4ff. Diehl [illegible] by Porphyry [illegible] vol. I, p. 394 [illegible] Plato [illegible] how does he want this? [illegible] because of [illegible] Matter [illegible] for God is always good, and that which is always good always does good? See also the por-

preexistence of matter, and that they considered matter to be engendered. It, like Augustine, they distinguish a disorderly state of engendered matter before the creation, this occurs under the influence of Platonism, as it does in the case of Philo.[illegible] In general, however, matter for the Christians is not created out of nothing. For them, the Platonic distinction between two senses of the word γενητός has no meaning, as far as the created universe is concerned. Moreover, the fact that Hierocles, like all Neoplatonists, conceives of the demiurge's creative act as eternal (ἀΐδιος) —that is, as dating from all eternity and having neither beginning nor end— is contrary to orthodox Christianity.[illegible] Christians laid particular emphasis on the fact that God creates the universe at a moment in time, from nothing, to something that did not exist previously and that must eventually disappear into nothingness. Thus, we see that creation ex nihilo, ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων, which Hierocles defended against the Middle Platonists' thesis of creation ἐκ φθορᾶς ὑποκειμένου, is not the same thing as the Christians' creation ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων. Proclus was a bit more hasty when he identified them.

Hierocles' argument that the creator of the world did not work like a human artisan—an argument that also appears in the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo*[illegible]—was once again utilized by both Neopla-

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

tonists and Christians against the Middle Platonists.[illegible] Yet Hierocles' argumentation is clearly situated within the Neoplatonic context. I quote Phoenix:[illegible]

> The author writes: those things of which it is said that they act according to their essence, not merely, are those that remain immutable in their own essence and in their activity, without detaching anything from themselves, without setting the universe in motion in order to bring about the existence of considered beings, but which, merely according to the very being which they are, bring about the generation of secondary beings. [illegible] It follows that they do not make matter, that they do not act from a state more or less, that they do not cause the emergence of time, and that that which is born does not exist outside the activity of what produces it. Indeed, all things of this world are accomplished by what is accidental, as in the case of an architect and mortise and tenon cases.

This text presents us with one of the fundamental theorems of Neoplatonism: the distinction between the immobile mode of creation of the hypostases above the soul, and the mode of creation of the soul, which is characterized by movement. The Neoplatonists gave partic-

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

ular emphasis to the fact that the demiurge creates by his being alone, in order to oppose the mode of action of their demiurge to that of the demiurge of the Gnostics and of the God of the Jews and the Christians, who creates by reflective will.[54] The Neoplatonic demiurge creates eternally, and as Hierocles says, the world does not exist "outside of the activity of that which produces it." In order to create, the demiurge has no need whatsoever of a matter existing beside him in a self-produced way. For all these reasons, the Neoplatonic demiurge does not resemble human artisans, who cannot do without matter or without instruments, and whose activity is only accidental (κατὰ συμβεβηκός).

Let us note above all that Hierocles formulates this theorem like a true Neoplatonist: he uses the plural to speak of *causes* which act by their very being. If, as Praechter would have it, Hierocles' system was unaware of a hypostasis higher than the demiurge-*Nous*, which would thus be the only hypercosmic divinity,[55] we should expect Hierocles to speak in this context of one single cause, the demiurge, instead of describing the mode of action of an entire class of beings in which the demiurge is included. Moreover, Hierocles' formulation, as reported by Photius, makes room for the Neoplatonists' habitual distinction between the primary beings (τὰ πρῶτα) and the secondary beings (τὰ δεύτερα).[56] In this context, the term τὰ δεύτερα designates all the degrees of being from the hypostasis of the soul on down, and the term τὰ πρῶτα, understood but not stated in our text, therefore includes the hypostasis or, more likely, the hypostases above the soul. If Photius does not give us precise information on the hierarchy of the hypostases above the *Nous*, or the hierarchy inside the *Nous*, this is probably to be ex-

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[54] Cf. the citation (n. 50). Cf. also Porphyry, in Proclus, *In Tim.* I, [illegible] [illegible]

[55] Praechter, "Hierokles," col. 1482.

[56] The Neoplatonic doctrine, proper to the [illegible] designate in a narrow sense the [illegible] terms of each series and the beings derived [illegible] from these primary terms. In a wider sense, however, they can also designate classes of beings. In the latter case, the secondary beings are often divided in turn into [illegible] and [illegible].

plained by Photius' lack of interest in such questions, and is not a confirmation of Praechter's hypothesis. We shall return to this problem later.

If Hierocles affirms that the class of beings in which the demiurge is included acts by its mere being, this does not contradict what he said earlier: that the demiurge's will is sufficient for him to bring beings into existence. We have already seen in a previous quotation that Porphyry unites within the same text the affirmation that the demiurge creates by his mere being and the affirmation that he creates by his mere thought. Iamblichus does the same. As Proclus explains in a proposition of his *Elements of Theology*, at the ontological level of the Nous—to which, following Plato, the demiurge generally belongs—to act by being and to act by thought are one and the same. In contrast to the Christians, however, the Neoplatonists would not say that the demiurge creates with the help of deliberative reflection. As Dodds correctly explains, the Neoplatonic demiurge creates because he thinks, but he does not think in order to create. The same holds true of the demiurge's will:

Cf. the first text cited at p. 15: Photius, *Library*, cod. 214, p. 172 a 22 ff. Bekker, vol. III, p. 126 Henry.

Cf. the quotation at n. [illegible]

Cf. Iamblichus, [illegible] III, [illegible] p. [illegible] des Places, where the demiurge is said to [illegible] J. M. Dillon, 1973 [illegible]

Porphyry [illegible]

Proclus, *El. Theol.*, prop. 174, [illegible]

Cf. Proclus, *In Tim.*, vol. I, p. [illegible]

E. R. Dodds, 1963, p. 290, note to prop. 174.

> In so far as the Demiurge is intellect, he produces all things by his intellections; in so far as he is an intelligible, he creates by his presence alone; in so far as he is a god, he creates by his will alone.[1]

Once again, however, the will of the Christian God and the will of the Neoplatonic demiurge are not the same thing; their wills are distinguished in the same way as their thoughts. In any event, each of Plato's exegetes was obliged to attribute a will to the creator of the universe because of the following passage from Plato's *Timaeus*, which concerns the demiurge:[2]

> He was good, but since he was good, he never conceived a feeling of envy towards anyone. Being exempt from such a feeling, he willed (εβουλετο) that all things, in so far as was possible, should become similar to him. . . Indeed, having willed (βουληθεις) that all things should be good, and that there should be nothing evil, in so far as was possible. . .

Proclus provides the following commentary:[3]

> For, if the Father was good, he wished to create all things as good, and if he willed this, then he did so, and he made the Universe in order. For providence depends on will, and will on goodness.

This commentary gives us a good idea of how, for the Neoplatonists, providence was automatically linked to the goodness and the will of God. It, therefore, Proclus sees in his treatise on providence, equates the will of the demiurge; this, like his thesis of creation without pre-existing matter, is easy to explain within the system of post-Porphyrian Neoplatonism

[1] Proclus, *In Timaeum* 1, p. [illegible], Diehl, trans. [illegible], 1903–1906, 1:[illegible]; cf. the Middle Platonist Alcinous, [illegible] of Plato, c. [illegible], 1955, [illegible]; where Proclus [illegible] the Porphyrian [illegible] the Middle Platonist [illegible] Plato's [illegible] Indeed, the [illegible] the Demiurge [illegible] Porphyrian [illegible] the quotation [illegible] Porphyrian [illegible] Plato's [illegible] Neoplatonism [illegible] Proclus [illegible] Plato, *Timaeus* 29e.

[2] Proclus, *In Timaeum* 1, p. [illegible], Diehl, trans. [illegible], 1903–1906, 1:[illegible]

itself, and there is no need whatsoever to look for Christian or Judaic influence coming from outside.

3. *Hierocles' Demiurge: Hierocles' Doctrine Revealed in the Three Gnostic Texts*

In the continuation of the first text quoted on page 15,[illegible] it is said of this demiurge that he created this world, the visible and invisible universe, by the mediation of the incorporeal and the corporeal natures, and that

> in this universe the wisdom that created the world distinguished, in conformity with their nature, beings which occupy the top, the centre and the bottom. The first of these corporeal beings are called celestial and godly; these celestial beings that have been allotted to the space following the great heavens, the [illegible] deities. They have become the interpreters and [illegible] of their hidden wisdom or mentalness. The gods of earth occupy the great rank; they are called terrestrial beings, human souls, and [illegible] Plato would say -- material men. These three kinds are attached to one another as if in a single living being, [illegible] and harmony, but their distinction is [illegible] with their natures preserved unmixed with regard to their [illegible] and their mutual conversion. And these deities are placed in the superior rank, command the lower ones, but the god who is their father and demiurge reigns as king over them all.[illegible]

Throughout this text and the parallel text from codex VI,[illegible] there is nothing that differs from the traditional conceptions of the Neoplatonists. First, however, let us explain what "creative wisdom" is, [illegible] means for Hierocles. A parallel text from Hierocles' commentary on the *Carmen aureum* can enlighten us with regard to this question:[illegible]

> Hierocles, in Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 214, p. 172 [illegible] III, p. 1[illegible] Hierocles, the parallel text in cod. 214, p. 4[illegible] cod. VII, p. 1[illegible] Hierocles' [illegible] which he [illegible] the gods that [illegible] the gods who [illegible] all.
>
> [illegible] Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum*, p. 1[illegible] Kahlos, *In Timaeum*, I, p. 150, 2[illegible] Diehl and the [illegible] 1968, I, 18[illegible] without I.
>
> For the text of these references of Hierocles, D. Isaac, I, 5, 16, 131, p. 4[illegible] des Places.
>
> Text quoted in [illegible]
>
> Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum*, p. 10[illegible]-21 Kahlos.

> God the demiurge produced the first, second, and third things different from one another by their nature, without them being confused with one another, and without them changing their rank (τάξις) as a function of their virtue or their vice. For the things which by essence are set in place for eternity have been distinguished according to kind, by the order (τάξις) that proceeds forth with them, and they have been disposed in a manner analogous to the demiurgic causes. In the same way as above (that is, on the ontological level of the demiurgic causes), the order (τάξις) of perfect wisdom includes things of the first rank, of the intermediate rank, and of the last rank – that is, being wisdom consists in producing creation in order (τάξις) and perfection, so that wisdom, order (τάξις), and perfection go together – in the same way, in the whole that is down here below, the things produced according to the god's first thought will be the first in the world, those concerned in accordance with intermediary thought will themselves be intermediate, and those that resemble the lowest limit of his theories will also be last among rational beings. For the whole of the place of rational beings, with the incorruptible body that is contained in it, as the image of the demiurgic god as a whole – of the sun in the above, the first things that are in the world are the gods in heaven, and the things that in this world have an intermediary rank are the middle image of the moon above, and the things that come in the third and last rank among rational beings are the image of the lowest limit of the above, coming in the last rank.

The "creative wisdom" of the universe is thus nothing other than the thought of the demiurge taken separately, as the cause of the differentiation of the beings of his creation. Proclus identifies it with Athena:[1]

> [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

In the text by Hierocles we have just cited, one notes, on the one hand, the very precise allusion to the ternary structure of the demiurge. The plural "demiurgic causes," used to describe the demiurge's activity, is already significant; it is an expression typical of late Neoplatonism, which we encounter very frequently in Proclus' commentary on the *Timaeus*. Above all, however, we here see Hierocles attributing to demiurgic reality a ternary structure that is just as much horizontal: wisdom, order | strength, and perfection, as it is vertical: primary thought, secondary thought, and ultimate thought; or summits, means, and lower limits. This representation of a hierarchy inherent in the demiurge is, in different forms, constant within Neoplatonism, since Amelius and Iamblichus. It is clearly expressed in the following text by Proclus:

> The Demiurge sort out his within-himself-existences of different ranks, of the first, the middle, and the last.[1]

[illegible]

1. [illegible]

2. [illegible]

3. [illegible]

4. [illegible]

In these texts, on the other hand, we can easily recognize a Neoplatonic classification of souls, and in particular of cosmic souls,[illegible] of which Hierocles names the principal groups: the primary rational souls (πρωτοπατρικαὶ ψυχαί), which inhabit the supralunary region (constituted in particular by the soul of the world, the souls of the planets and of the fixed stars); the intermediate rational souls (μεταξυπατρικαί, demons, angels, or heroes), placed between the moon and the earth in the space of the air; and the last rational souls (οἰκοπατρικαὶ ψυχαί) or human souls incorporated on earth. The triadic structure of the class of rational souls is the image of the triadic structure of the demiurge-Νοῦς, which thinks itself as it creates. It seems that the creation of the class of rational souls according to a series of primary, secondary, and tertiary processions comes from Iamblichus.[illegible] It goes without saying, and Hierocles states as much explicitly in his interpretation of the *Carmen aureum*,[illegible] that there are many other subdivisions within this triadic division of the class of rational souls, especially among the gods; they are, of course, always a faithful reflection of the structure of the demiurge-Νοῦς. Such a structured and complex demiurgic entity is characteristic of a Neoplatonic system that has already reached an advanced developmental stage, and it always supposes another simple cause that precedes it in the order of the hierarchy. With regard to these three classes of souls, Hierocles specifies that they form a unity, although each maintains its distinctness. The expression συνεχόμενος ἑνώσει, had been a key term in Neoplatonism since Porphyry,[illegible] which, among other things, was used to explain the birth of the multitude of sensible forms from the pure unity of the One. In the first hypostasis after the One, alterity is almost nonexistent, and the unity of all the beings of emanation is therefore far superior to their mutual distinction, which nevertheless already exists. From hypostasis to hypostasis, unity

[illegible] On the exceptions, classification [illegible] Proclus, *El. Theol.*, prop. 184. [illegible] Proclus and other [illegible] of the [illegible] reconciliation between thought and [illegible] always thinking, but [illegible] Cf. [illegible] 114, 3. Hierocles' hierarchy, [illegible] designed [illegible] the first [illegible] p. 43.

[illegible] Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum*, III, p. 19, 9–27 Köhler. It seems [illegible] that [illegible] considerable [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] demons, and angels, [illegible] also Proclus, *In Timaeum*, III, p. 164, 6–21 Diehl.

[illegible] Cf. Iamblichus, *De anima*, [illegible] p. 349, 37, p. 372, 2 Wachsmuth [illegible] p. 114, 3.

[illegible] Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum*, I, p. 10, 26–11, 3 Köhler.

[illegible] Cf. H. Dörrie, 1959, p. 173.

becomes weaker and distinction increases. The last hypostasis that still maintains its unity, although it contains distinctions that are already barely pronounced, is the hypostasis of the soul. Porphyry explains this as follows:[20]

> We must not believe that the multitude of souls results from the multitude of bodies, but on the contrary, that before bodies there are both multiple souls and one single soul. The soul that is both one and universal does not prevent the multiple souls from being within it, and the multiple souls do not divide between them the soul that is one; for they have been distinguished without being cut off from one another and without breaking the universal soul into their different individualities, and they are present to one another without being confused with one another, and without constituting the universal soul by their addition. For they are not separated by limits, nor are they confused with one another, or the same with its essences, which all multiples are not confused within one single soul, nor are they mixed within the soul as if within a body, that is, as an essence different from the soul, but they are the qualifying acts of the soul . . .

From Porphyry to Iamblichus, the meaning of the expression "universal soul" (ψυχὴ ὅλη) underwent an evolution: the former understands it as the World Soul, the latter as an unparticipated and hypercosmic soul. Moreover, the difference within the totality of souls became more and more clearly marked. It was apparently Iamblichus who introduced the classification of souls by kind, such as set forth by Hierocles.[21] Nevertheless, the dogma of henosis was maintained in its full value, and without change.[22] What constitutes the unity of its essence is the fact that the soul, according to Iamblichus, "is defined as 'the middle term between the divisible and indivisible kinds,' and between the corporeal kinds and the incorporeal kinds." But this does not exclude that between the three classes of souls there may exist differences of kind and of nature, as Hierocles specifies.[23] Hierocles will explain what these differences are a little further on.

[20] Porphyry, *Sent.*, 17, p. 43, 1–13, in Lamberz.

[21] Iamblichus, *De anima*, in Stobaeus, I, 49, 37, p. 372, 15ff., p. 372, 26ff. Wachsmuth, and I. Mueller, 1971, pp. 42–43.

[22] On the henosis of the soul, see Porphyry's epistemological Simplicius, *In De anima*, 7a, 14–17, [illegible] p. 77, 3–15 Hayduck.

[23] Iamblichus, *De anima*, [illegible] p. 366, 27ff. Wachsmuth. Cf. also Hierocles, [illegible] 551[illegible]–[illegible]

[24] [illegible] p. 51

As Hierocles emphasizes by his repeated addition of the adjective λογικοί, the souls in the three groups enumerated are rational souls only. He thus adheres to the doctrine of late Neoplatonists like Hermias, Syrianus, Proclus, and their successors, who understand by "soul" in the strict sense only the rational soul, even when it is the human soul that is under consideration. For them, the principles of animal and vegetable life, considered as mere reflections or traces of the rational soul in the body, do not fall within the class of truly self-moving souls.[1] Yet this does not prevent them from occasionally accepting, especially when interpreting Aristotle, the broad habitual concept of "human soul."[2] The irrational soul is no longer the work of the demiurge himself. Hierocles explains this as follows:[3]

> that which is deprived by nature of intellect is in no way capable of participating in the truth and in virtue; for this reason it cannot be the work of the demiurge. How, indeed, could the irrational and that which is deprived of intellect, be an image of the intelligible god? Each image of him is provided with intellect and with reason, and is capable of knowing itself and of knowing its creator.

Obviously, as in the text cited on page 51, what is at issue is the Neoplatonic thesis according to which each hypostasis is the image of the cause that precedes it. Thus, Proclus can say that "every soul is ... the intelligibles in the mode of an image or a reflection."[4] The hypostasis at two removes from a cause is no longer the image of this cause but an image of the image. The Neoplatonic doctrine to which Hierocles alludes developed from the passage of the *Timaeus*, where Plato says that the demiurge "wanted all things, as far as was possible, to be become similar to him,"[5] and from another passage of the *Timaeus* (42d ff.)

[1] Hermias, *In Phaedrum*, 102, 1-9 [illegible] Besides, the [illegible] Thus call [illegible] Nous, that which [illegible] and that of which it is [illegible] soul, but [illegible] of the [illegible] of the [illegible] that which they call "soul" in the proper and [illegible] Aristotle [illegible] Dodds, [illegible] Syrianus, *In Phaed.*, vol. II, p. 124, 8-11, 30-31. This [illegible] discussed [illegible] *In Tim.*, cap. 188, p. 217, 7 [illegible] discussed.

[2] Hierocles in Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 251, p. 462a24 Bekker, vol. VII, p. 184 Henry; C.I. Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum*, XI, p. 52, 2-6 & Elev., cited n. 126.

[3] Proclus, *El. Theol.*, prop. 185, p. 150, 4-5 Dodds.

from which the Neoplatonists deduced that the last work of the demiurge himself was the rational human soul.[illegible]

As is shown by the text of Hierocles that has just been cited,[illegible] the affirmation that the rational human soul was the demiurge's last work must be understood in the sense that it was the last work to come directly from the demiurge. For it is obvious that, in a certain sense, the demiurge also creates mortal beings. On this subject, too, Proclus shares Hierocles' opinion. I quote from his *Commentary on the Timaeus*:[illegible]

> But let us not say that the demiurge does not also create mortal beings. He does create them, but by means of the recent gods. For before they create, he created by his mere act of thinking.

Thus the irrational soul is not, properly speaking, the work of the demiurge, but of the recent gods of Plato's *Timaeus*, or of mortal nature[illegible] and according to Hierocles it is blown into the material or "shell-like"[illegible] body by the luminous, immaterial body.

6. Hierocles' Doctrine of the Unity of the Soul: Pre-Lucidophage

Since the doctrine concerning the carriage-souls and the luminous body allows us to situate Hierocles in a quite determinate place within the history of Neoplatonism, it may be useful to study it with some care.

[illegible] Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum*, VI, p. 32, [illegible] Hierocl. [illegible] [illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.*, vol. III, p. 199, 15–29 (1968).

[illegible]

Proclus, *In Tim.*, vol. III, p. 234, 25ff. (1968), quoted after the trans. by Festugière, 1966–1968, [illegible]

[illegible] Plato, *Republic*, VIII, [illegible] 1, p. 549 [illegible] Plato.

[illegible] "shell-like body" (trans. [illegible]). The image comes from Plato, *Phaedrus*, 246a[illegible] [illegible] work supplied by this mode which, under the guise of a body, we call a shell."

As Hierocles explains in his commentary on the *Carmen aureum*,[illegible] the rational human soul possesses a vehicle, the luminous body (*augoeidès*, *aiqēr*), which is congenital (*sun*-, sempiternal, and which, like it, is the work of the demiurge.[illegible] This luminous or pneumatic immaterial body,[illegible] which is a kind of life, ensures the junction of the rational human soul with its mortal body. At the time of the rational soul's incorporation, the luminous body is placed within the still inanimate mortal body, and it breathes into it the life that is active within matter (*zōē enyloē*); that is, irrational life or soul. Our animate mortal body (or mortal animal, since it is made up of the irrational soul and the material body) is a mere image of the human being constituted by the rational soul and the immaterial body.[illegible] We thus obtain the following schema:

rational soul immaterial body	= created by the demiurge	= immortal	= human being	
irrational soul material body	= created by the equivocal cosmic gods	= mortal	= image of the human being	

Hierocles thus knows of two bodies, one that is congenital (*suntropos*)[illegible] to the rational soul, immortal like it, and immaterial; this is the luminous or pneumatic body. The other body is adventitious

[illegible] *In Carmen aureum*, XXVI, p. 112, 1–5 Koehler: "Here is the teaching which [illegible] the Pythagoreans [illegible] the soul [illegible] the same is [illegible] the immortal body [illegible] the mortal body [illegible] life, which [illegible] congenital [illegible] which [illegible] the immortal [illegible] the mortal body."

[illegible] *In Carmen aureum*, XXVI, p. 110, 22–111, 5 Koehler:

[illegible] III, 14 (382, 1[illegible]), p. 117 [illegible] III, p. 208, 24 Diehl [illegible] Boethus [illegible] Porphyry [illegible] the soul [illegible] which possesses a generative power [illegible] Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum*, XXVI, p. 113, [illegible]

[illegible] *In Carmen aureum*, XXVI, p. 111, 11–17 Koehler: "In the same way [illegible] with a congenital and immaterial body" [illegible]

In Carmen aureum, XXVI, p. 110, 22 Koehler.

superior[illegible] to the first body, material, and mortal: this is the human body, composed by the four elements, earth, water, air, and fire.

The pneumatic body itself is described by Hierocles as a "kind of life energy" that is obviously neither a rational soul nor an irrational soul,[illegible] but associated with the former, although it is inferior to it because of its very function as vehicle or body.[illegible] However, it is the creator of the irrational soul, and therefore superior to it.[illegible] Hierocles indicates, moreover, that it is immaterial, and thus it is the work of the demiurge, for these two characteristics are stated of the luminous vehicle. Hierocles[illegible] explains the relation of the rational human soul to its luminous body as follows:

> The rational essence came into being, having received from the demiurge a body that is congenital, immaterial, so that it is neither a body, nor without a body, it is incorporeal itself, but its entire species remained in a body. It is with this series, the upper part of the stars is an incorporeal essence, the part below is corporeal; and the sun starts to shine, what results from the incorporeal and the body, without these being any moment in which these parts are distinguished and are then put back together, but they would thus be separated again. But they are produced together, and are coordinated according to a hierarchic order, so that one commands and the other obeys. The same holds true of the rational kind: that came later, that is, the heroic kind[illegible] and the human kind, each being a rational soul with a luminous body. In the case of the heroic man, a rational soul with a congenital, immaterial body. This was the disarrangement of the Pythagoreans which Plato revealed subsequently, and

[illegible] XXIX, p. 98, 24–26 Kobler, following Plato, [illegible] Vi, 4 (d2, XXXI, p. 115, 3 Kobler).

[illegible] XXXI, p. [illegible] The [illegible] 1965, p. 143, 34[illegible] Hierocles, [illegible]

[illegible] 1965, p. 143, 34[illegible] Hierocles, [illegible]

[illegible] XXXI, p. 112, [illegible] Kobler: "The incorporeal soul is a kind of life energy [illegible]

[illegible] XXXI, p. 111 = 22–111, 1[illegible] Kobler.

[illegible] because [illegible] the part which is the part closest to the human soul." Hierocles, [illegible] III, p. 17, 24–19, 27 Kobler.

> pacing every divine and human soul "with the coordinate powers of the winged chariot and its driver" (*Phaedrus* 246a).[44]

The human soul's pneumatic body will thus return with the rational soul to the ethereal region (τὸν αἰθέριον τόπον), "whence it came."[45] This region is situated beneath the moon.[46]

Although Hierocles agrees with Iamblichus with regard to the immortality of the pneumatic or luminous vehicle, he departs from the latter's discussion of the creator of the vehicle and the irrational soul: for Hierocles the creator of the vehicle is the demiurge, whereas for Iamblichus it is the recent gods. For Hierocles, the irrational soul is mortal, whereas Iamblichus, like Plutarch of Athens, considers it as immortal.[47] This is shown by the following text of Proclus:[48]

> In the third place come those who remove all kinds of destruction both from the vehicle and from the irrational, who reduce both the permanence of the vehicle and that of the irrational to the same thing, whereupon what is mortal without achieving the corporation that is subject to the future or to time, and which cares for mortal things. Such is the opinion of Iamblichus and of all those who think it good to agree with him, who do not make the existence of the vehicle and of the irrational divine points and utterly strip the divine bodies, so that, having issued forth from mortal causes, they should also be mortal, by their immortal nature, but from the gods themselves who dwell in the World and rules, are all things eternal.[49]

Proclus' declaration is corroborated by two texts from Iamblichus' *De anima* collected by Stobaeus, in which Iamblichus expresses his own opinion, which is generally identical to the view of those he calls the "Ancients" or the "ancient priests." In the first, he says:

[44] For a very depleted study of this *Phaedrus* text, cf. Hermias, *In Phaedr.*, p. 122, 1901, p. 192, 25–193, 29 Couvreur.

[45] Cf. Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum*, XXVI, p. 11 [illegible] Kamada.

[46] Cf. Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum*, XXVII, p. 120, 2–7 Kamada: "But since it [of the rational soul] is [illegible] place in order to be ranged [illegible] the stars, [illegible] For such a body, the appropriate place is that which is situated immediately [illegible] the moon, for such a place is superior to material bodies, but beneath the human bodies; this place is called 'the ether' by the Pythagoreans."

[47] Cf. Hierocles, *In Phaedr.*, I, v. 377, p. 167, Westerink, and Olympiodorus, *In Phaed.*, 10, 7, p. 144 Westerink.

[48] Proclus, *In Tim.*, III, p. 234, 320 Diehl, trans. based on that of Festugière, 1966–1968, 5 [illegible]

[49] Cf. W. Deuse, 1997, p. 408.

> ... or else the entire irrational life, separated from the Intelligence, subsists as well, and is conserved in the cosmos, as the most ancient Priests declare.

To the second, he adds:

> But perhaps one could formulate the new and more plausible conjecture that these lives too continue to exist within the All, and that they are not destroyed.

On the other hand, with regard to the doctrine of the vehicle of the soul, Hierocles differs from Proclus and from Syrianus on other points than that concerning immortality. Proclus attributes to his master Syrianus the following doctrine, which was maintained, broadly speaking, until Damascius, and which appears as a combination of preceding systems. The rational soul, produced by the demiurge, receives from him a vehicle that is eternal and immortal, like the soul is: [illegible] ὄχημα, and that always remains attached to the same soul. At each new series of incarnations of a rational soul, before the visible body that is created together with vegetative life at each individual incorporation, the recent gods of Plato's *Timaeus*, who are the encosmic gods, produce the irrational soul, and another vehicle, this one pneumatic, composed of the four elements [illegible], which is attached to the irrational soul. This vehicle, with its irrational soul, enters and leaves the visible or "shell-like" body together with the rational soul and its vehicle; that is to say, together with its soul, it survives an entire series of reincorporations. Ultimately, however, it is destroyed, together with its soul on the occasion of the complete purification of the rational soul. The vegetative soul, by contrast, dies immediately along with the visible body, which is sometimes called "the third vehicle." As Proclus says,

> Threefold is thus the vehicle: either simple and immaterial, or simple and material, or composite and material. And the lives of these ve-

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Iamblichus, *De anima*, ap. Stob., *Anthol.* I, 49, 43, p. 384, 26; I, 49, 43, p. 370, 111 Wachsmuth, English after the trans. of A.-J. Festugière, [illegible]

Cf. Proclus, *In Tim.*, vol. III, p. 236, [illegible] Diehl.

Cf. Proclus, *In Tim.*, vol. III, p. 238, [illegible] Diehl.

Cf. Proclus, *In Tim.*, vol. III, p. 236, [illegible]; cf. Damascius, *In Phaed.* I, § 238, p. 143 Westerink. [illegible] Damascius, *In Phaed.* I, § 551, p. 285 Westerink. [illegible] *In Phaed.* [illegible] p. 143 Westerink.

Proclus, *In Tim.*, vol. III, p. 298, [illegible] Diehl; Olympiodorus, *In Phaed.* [illegible] p. 175 Westerink.

Proclus, *In Tim.*, vol. III, p. 298, [illegible] Diehl.

bicles are three: one immortal, the other of longer duration than the body, the third perishing with the body.

This increase in the number of vehicles[17] is important, not only in the case of human souls, but also within the entire hierarchy of the psychic class. According to Proclus,[18] the divine souls possess only the luminous vehicle, whereas the mediate class of the demons, in addition to the luminous vehicle, also uses the pneumatic vehicle; and the human souls have, over and above these two vehicles, the mortal body as third vehicle. For Hierocles, on the contrary, as we have seen,[19] the three classes of souls all possess one unique vehicle, which is at the same time luminous and pneumatic. Human souls, however, possess the mortal body in addition.

In Hermias, we find the same system as in Hierocles. In his commentary on Plato's *Phaedrus*, he too is aware of only one vehicle of the soul besides the visible body—a vehicle which is at the same time luminous and pneumatic, conceived of as eternal and immaterial,[20] the purification of which takes place by the telestai.[21] We also find in him

[17] [illegible]

[18] Proclus, [illegible] (Ed. [illegible]) [illegible]

[19] [illegible]

[20] Hermias, *In Phaedrum*, p. [illegible] (Ed. [illegible]): "[illegible] Proclus, 24 de[illegible] [illegible] pneumatic vehicle [illegible] Hermias [illegible] the luminous vehicle [illegible] Proclus, *Commentary on the Republic*, [illegible], p. 23, n. [illegible]). According to Carlos [illegible] the pneumatic vehicle.

[21] Hermias, *In Phaedrum*, p. [illegible]: "[illegible] Mathematics [illegible] the rational soul. Hierocles recommends mathematics [illegible] [illegible] *Commentary*, XXXVI, 1 [illegible] [illegible] p. [illegible]). Proclus also attributes mathematics and geometry as a purifying effect on the rational soul, which leads to contemplative virtue,

the same distinction between man and the living being,[illegible] all of which is combined with the thesis of the mortality of the irrational soul.[illegible] This system avoids the alternative Proclus thinks is inevitable for all those who admit the existence of only one vehicle of the soul:

> Of these people, he says, "some, after having destroyed the vehicle, are forced to represent the soul as being at a certain moment outside of all bodies. Others, who preserve the vehicle, are obliged to render irrational life immortal as well." This results from the fact that neither group has made a distinction between the congenital vehicle [illegible], [illegible] and that which is [illegible] between the first and the second, the one assigned to the one and only Demiurge and that which has been "woven together with the soul" by the multiple demiurges; although Plato clearly distinguished between these vehicles.

According to Proclus, then, Plato's phrase in the *Timaeus* (42e) "[illegible]" thus relates to the pneumatic vehicle with the irrational soul; whereas for Hierocles and Hermias, it designates the visible human body together with the irrational soul. Hierocles and Hermias therefore do not yield to Proclus' alternative; they consider the irrational soul to be mortal, whereas they attribute immortality to the rational and vehicle of the soul. For them, the irrational soul is not linked to the vehicle at all, but to the body. Nevertheless, nothing in Proclus' brief historical exposition allows us to glimpse the existence of a doctrine like the one we find in Hermias and Hierocles, although it is hard to imagine he did not know it. The alternative that Proclus' own system aspires makes him even hide a priori the existence of such a doctrine.

This brief survey of the various Neoplatonic doctrines on the pneumatic vehicle and the irrational soul lets us see that the doctrine presented by Hierocles corresponds exactly to a stage of development that the theory of the pneumatic vehicle attained between Iamblichus and Syrianus[illegible] or Proclus.

and be a [illegible] which leads to theoretical [illegible] *Theo.*, 18, 9ff., p. 82s, 4-9, 1-5 in, 14, p. [illegible] Kroll.

[illegible] Hermias, *In Phaedr.*, p. 132, 14-17 Couvreur.

[illegible] Hermias, *In Phaedr.*, p. 123, [illegible] Couvreur.

Proclus, *In Tim.*, III, p. 300, [illegible] Diehl.

[illegible] I consider Hermias' commentary on the *Phaedrus* as simply a record of the classes of Syrianus, [illegible] H. Dörrie, 1987, [illegible] Syrianus at this time, had never developed the whole set of hypotheses concerning the soul's vehicles, or else that the conception of the soul's own vehicles instead of one, is due to Proclus.

7. *Hierocles' Doctrine of the Three Classes of Souls Is Post-Iamblichean*

Although we cannot fix a *terminus ante quem* this time, it is again a post-Iamblichean doctrine we encounter in the description that Hierocles now proposes of the three classes of souls. After insisting that only rational souls are under discussion, and that these three classes of souls form a unity, although each maintains its distinctiveness, Hierocles now specifies how they differ from one another:[illegible]

> Since there are three successive intellective kinds, the first and highest of the demiurge's productions which has received unchangeable and invariably [illegible] its resemblance (similarity) to him, is the all godlike good order, as we said of the kind of the heavenly beings. The second kind, which receives the divine order in a secondary and degraded way, does not share in the demiurge's resemblance unchangeably and indivisibly ([illegible]), but is unchangingly and unwaveringly turned towards the paternal laws, which characteristics we attributed to the ethereal beings. The third, as the last of the divine kinds, is not only inferior to the excellence of the heavenly beings by the fact that it is to some extent subject to alteration ([illegible]), but because of the fact that it can sometimes be worsened ([illegible]) it is situated below the worth (rigor) of the ethereal beings. For the fact of always intelligizing the gods, and of possessing knowledge of him in unified form ([illegible]) pertains to the heavenly beings, whereas intelligizing him always, but discursively ([illegible]), belongs by essence to the ethereal beings. But the fact of not always intelligizing, and of intelligizing in a partial way ([illegible]) in the very act of intelligizing, has been attributed as a proper characteristic to human souls, which by nature fall short of the undivided intellection ([illegible]) of the heavenly beings and the knowledge, [illegible] in an orderly way, of the ethereal beings, since these souls do not intelligize either in a unified way ([illegible]) or perpetually ([illegible]), but even when they are raised up to the worth of intelligizing, they imitate the knowledge of the ethereal beings, and by following them thus they reap the fruit of the vision of the intelligibles.

[illegible] Hierocles, in Photius, *Library*, cod. 251, 463b[illegible] Bekker, ed. [illegible] VII, p. 193 Henry.

[illegible] In this context, the adjectives [illegible] and [illegible] have the meaning "to be capable" or "to be subject to" [illegible] "to be subject to sometimes becoming bad" [illegible] the nature of souls of the third class does not [illegible] and to become evil, but that this depends only on themselves [illegible] XXXV 245–275 Hadot [illegible] With regard to the text, [illegible] had already [illegible] that all the [illegible] in this section (XXXV 258 [illegible]; XXXV 260 [illegible]; XXXV 266 [illegible]; XXXV 267 [illegible]) mean "to be capable of."

We can easily recognize the broad outlines of the doctrine that developed [illegible] from Plato's *Phaedrus* (246a), to which all the late Neoplatonists subscribe, and which Proclus condensed as follows in propositions 184 and 185 of the *Elements of Theology*:[illegible]

> Every soul is either divine, or else subject to passing from thought to ignorance, or else intermediary between these two; that is, it intelligizes (always, but is inferior to the divine souls . . .); and "All the divine souls are souls of the heavens of the soul, whereas all souls which participate in the intellective intellect always belong to the cortege of the gods, and all souls subject to change belong to the cortege of the gods only intermittently . . .

It seems to have been Iamblichus[illegible] who introduced this doctrine of the three classes of souls, which differ from one another by the degree of their participation in reasoning and sensing.

The most important element of the text we have cited from Hierocles is the last sentence, where he implies that human souls do not participate directly in the intellect but require the mediation of intermediate souls.[illegible] Proclus explains this in his *Commentary on the Timaeus*:[illegible]

[illegible] the [illegible] Proclus, [illegible] p. 4[illegible]

[illegible] Proclus, [illegible] pp. 134, 135, [illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.*, vol. III, p. 216, 5–26, [illegible] Dodds

[illegible] 184, 5

[illegible] There is [illegible] section XXVII, p. 129, 220. [illegible] the three classes [illegible] discussed. [illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.*, vol. III, p. 144, 31–144, 22 Diehl (trans. based on Festugière, 1966–1968, 5:184–185)

> Indeed, each of these [that is, of human souls] has a body attached to it, through which it is [illegible]. However, there is no peculiar intellect established above it, and this is why it does not always think. For all the intermediary souls, … however, there is, on the one hand, a body attached to them, and this is why they are [illegible], exceeding [illegible] by their union with the body, and there is a peculiar intellect, on which they depend, and this is why they are always in the Intelligible. … And we will say that, to human souls, the Indivisible is what is indivisible in the souls above them—these souls which are always in intellection, on which they depend, and in which they participate insofar as is possible, for it is thanks to these intermediary souls that they are also linked to the intellects superior to the intermediary ones, and they become intellective by means of these intermediary souls. Since, then, the extremes are as we have described them, all intermediary souls have their own forms of the indivisible and of the divisible, whether they are of divine rank, or of the daemonic rank, or demons endowed with reason.

According to Hierocles and Proclus, the human soul, unlike the other souls, does not participate directly in the Intellect. It can therefore know the Forms only in an indirect and very imperfect way. This rather low status given to the rational human soul by no means dates from Middle Platonism, but reveals the influence of Iamblichus. We know that Iamblichus objected against the doctrine of the ancients—Plotinus and Porphyry, among others—who maintained the existence within us of something impassive and always in the act of thinking, and who declared that the soul is consubstantial with the intellect.[illegible] According to Proclus, Iamblichus' argument against such theories ran as follows:

[illegible] Proclus here designates as [illegible] the souls [illegible] souls and human souls [illegible].

[illegible] Cf. also Proclus, *In Tim.* [illegible]

[illegible] Iamblichus, [illegible] Iamblichus in Proclus, *In Tim.* [illegible] Porphyry [illegible] the soul [illegible] the Intellect [illegible] becomes as it were [illegible] and descends [illegible]

> What is it that stimulates, when, under the impulse of the irrational part, we hasten towards an impure imagination? Is it not our free choice (*autexousion*)? How could it be anything else? For it is by this that we overcome the precipitous floods of the imagination. But if free choice (*prohairesis*) is sin, how can the soul be without sin? Moreover, what is it that makes our entire life happy? Is it not the fact that it can possess its own virtue? This, it seems, is what we should say. But if it is when the dominant part within us is perfect that our entire being is also happy, then what would prevent all human beings from being happy now, as well, if the highest part within us is always thinking, and always among the divine beings? It is this part is the intellect, even if it has nothing to do with the soul. But if it is a part of the soul, then all the rest of the soul is also happy.—Besides, which is the soul's characteristic? Is it not what is most beautiful in our being, and which is, so to speak, as head to the greatest degree? How can we gainsaying this, if it is true that this charioteer is he who governs our entire substance, by whose aid his head, sees the supracelestial place and becomes similar to the "Great Leader" of his gods; this charioteer who drives a winged chariot, and is the first steadfast in his course. But if the highest part within us is the charioteer, and it, as is said in the *Phaedrus*[24] [illegible] elevates the heights of the heavens and raises our head towards the place beyond, and sometimes plunges and [illegible] his course—[illegible] the shedding of wings—the conclusion is evident, that the highest part within us [illegible] sometimes in our state, and sometimes in another.

We must also situate the following testimony of Phorius on Hierocles within the same context:

> It is good to know, says the author, that the soul, when it is turned towards the intellect, is not rid of that weakness that sometimes makes it unreasonable; conversely, in the most blameable state, it has not lost the ability to return to thought and to repent in a healthy way. For the human soul, having been created, this is its nature, has the capacity to participate simultaneously in divine happiness and in mortal destiny.

[illegible] (Bekker, trans. based on Westermann, 1866–1868, 5.256–[illegible]; cf. Simplicius, *In Epictetum*, p. 2[illegible]; [illegible] Hierocles, ibid., pp. 5, 19, 39, 44; 31[illegible] 1: 257, 17; Photius, *Bibliotheca*, p. 52, 13 Bekker. Whereas texts are cited by Henry, cf. 1944–54, 1.25[illegible]).

[illegible] Hierocles, or Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 251, 461b14 Bekker, vol. XII, p. 198 Henry.

This natural defectiveness of the rational human soul explains the importance of theurgy for its salvation. As we have briefly had occasion to mention,[ ] theurgy, in a process that began with Iamblichus, occupies a considerable place in Hierocles' commentary on the *Carmen aureum*, as we will now see in more detail.

Theurgy

The extracts that Photius took from Hierocles' treatise *On Providence* do not speak of theurgy. This lacuna is compensated by the last chapters (XXV, XXVI, and XXVII) of Hierocles' commentary on the *Carmen aureum*, which describe in detail the conditions that must be fulfilled so that the rational human soul may return to its homeland. These conditions are the same as in Iamblichus: the acquisition of virtue, learning the mathematical sciences and philosophy, which together purify the rational soul; and theurgy, which purifies the pneumatic or luminous body. For Hierocles, however, theurgy has two parts, celestics and hieratical elevations, a bipartition that we will find clearly expressed again in Proclus, albeit probably not with the same meaning. For Hierocles, as we shall see, celestics includes the totality of local pagan rites, whereas for Proclus this term seems to signify, in particular, the art of animating statues.[ ] Quote Hierocles:

> The purifications required for the rational soul are the mathematical sciences, and the elevating deliverance is the dialectical vision of beings (ὁρατικὴ ἐπιστήμη τῶν ὄντων). This is why "deliverance" has been mentioned, in the *Carmen aureum*, in the singular: "on the soul's deliverance," because deliverance is completed in a single science, whereas mathematics contains a plurality of sciences. It is also necessary to add to the luminous body prescriptions analogous to those that are appropriately transmitted for the soul's purifications and deliverance. Celestic purifications must therefore come together with those of mathematics, and hieratic elevation must accompany dialectical deliverance. For these things are particularly apt to purify the pneumatic vehicle of the rational soul and render it perfect, to separate it from matters back of life, and to prepare it to be apt to have converse with the pure pneumatical, pneumatic bodies).
>
> Just as it is fitting for the soul to be adorned with science and with

[ ] Cf. above, chap. II, sec. 1, p. [illegible] with n. 28.
[ ] On Proclus, cf. C. van Liefferinge, [illegible], pp. [illegible]-[illegible].

> virtues so that it may keep company with those who are permanently in possession thereof, so the luminous vehicle must be rendered pure and immaterial, so that it may evolve community with the ethereal bodies.

After saying that we must neglect neither the purification of the material soul nor that of the luminous vehicle, Hierocles continues a bit further on:

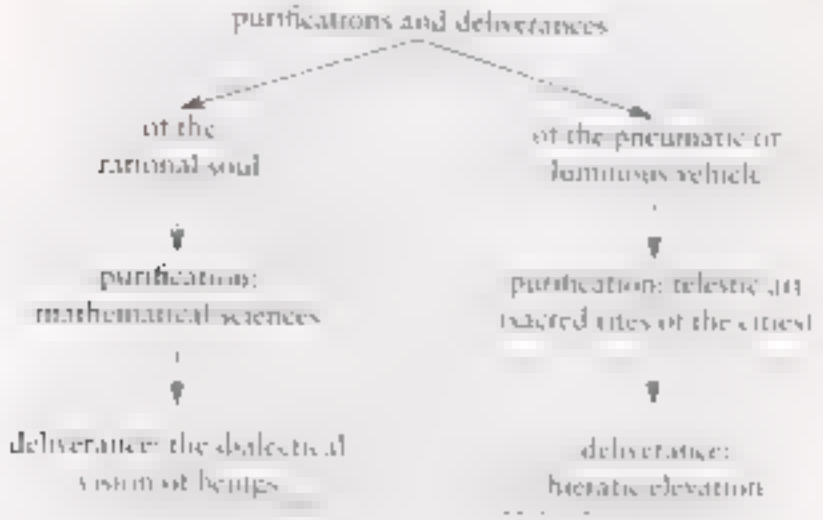
> Thus so the philosophy is united with the art of sacred things and so regular is you, since it is concerned with the purification of the luminous vehicle, and if you separate the philosophical intellect from this art, you will find that it no longer has the same power. [illegible] Indeed, of the actions that work towards the complete and perfection, some were first discovered by the philosophical intellect and others were introduced by celestial actions following the philosophical intellect. From celestial actions, the power that purifies the luminous vehicle, so that, of the whole of philosophy, the theoretical part that somehow is intellect and the practical part may be thus, as a power. Yet let us postulate two specific practical actions: the actions and the other to celestial actions. One purifies us from sympathies through the virtues, and the other by consecrated initiations through the sacred methods. Most wonderful is the mutual relation of political philosophy, or the laws that regulate a collectivity, and of celestial philosophy, the sacred rites [illegible] practised in the cities. But the summit of all philosophy is the theoretical intellect, in the middle is the political intellect, and below is the celestial intellect. [illegible] Thus so we must put together the [illegible] angle to reach the soul that holds the truth, the power that protects virtues, and that which produces parts, so that political excellence may be accomplished in conformity with the dominant intellect, and that the sacred rites may be shown to be in accord with both.

The contents of these texts may be schematized by the two following figures:

Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum*, XXVI, 24–26, p. 116, 20–117, 1 (cf. On the simplest bodies, cf. above, pp. 16–42. Vocabulary of mathematics in Neoplatonic philosophy, cf. I. Hadot, 1978, 13–15 of Mathematics).

Cf. Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum*, XXVI, 8–9, p. 115, 20–116, 1 (ibid.): "The practitioners, both in public [illegible] and the sacred laws and the technique of the sciences. [illegible] Thus [illegible] according to the gods and not with numbers [illegible] is consistent with the causes of the truth and of virtue."

Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum*, XXVI, 24–26, p. 117, 20–118, 21 (ibid.).



division of philosophy in hierarchical order:
theoretical or contemplative intellect
political intellect: civic morality
telestic intellect

In the last division, we no longer hear of "hieratic elevation," which certainly corresponds to the highest level of theurgy, whereas the telestic art probably includes the two lower levels of theurgy, according to Iamblichus. What is interesting is that theurgy is by no means opposed to philosophy, but is integrated within it.

Chapter XXVII deals briefly with the fate of the rational human soul after its purification, and that of its vehicle. In accordance with the *Golden Verses* on which he is commenting:

> And if, having abandoned your body, you reach the free ether, you will be an immortal god.

Hierocles has both soul and vehicle arrive together in the ethereal region, which is situated below the moon. It is not, however, certain that what is at issue is anything other than a provisional affirmation, required both by the text to be commented upon and the elementary nature of this commentary; he may have refined this affirmation in another, more technical context. In any case, like Porphyry and Iamblichus, Hierocles is of the opinion that only a small number of human beings can arrive at this supreme goal.[37]

[37] Cf. Hierocles, *In Carmen Aureum*, XXIV, 12, p. 106–240; XXV, 1–8, p. 108, 24–107, 26; XXV, 12, p. 108, 12–19 (Kahle); Iamblichus, ed. Pistelli, van Liefferinge, 1999, pp. 23–124; Cf. Porphyry, *Letter to Marcella*, 297, Sodano.

9. *The Essence of the Human Soul Is Subject to a Kind of Alteration*

In his book *The Changing Self*, Carlos Steel (1997) was able to show the influence of the philosophy of Iamblichus on all the later Neoplatonists, and in particular on Damascius and Priscian, to whom he attributes the commentary on the *De anima* edited under the name of Simplicius. I have already expressed my reservations on this point.[*] Steel's readers are led to conclude that the doctrine that the very essence of the rational human soul can be subject to a certain alteration was admitted only by three Neoplatonists: Iamblichus, Damascius, and Priscian. Yet this way of presenting things risks falsifying our historical perspective. I therefore propose to contribute some supplementary elements to the history of this doctrine.

I have demonstrated elsewhere[**] that Simplicius, as a student of Damascius, also adopted this personal view. We shall see that Hierocles also adhered to this doctrine. I begin by quoting a text that speaks of the possibility of a certain corruption of the essence of the rational human soul:

> Since our nature is rational, and consequently apprehends intelligible and sensible, through discursive thought, it leads to deliberate well or badly, the form of life according to nature preserves and saves its essence, but the choice of what we ought not to have chosen corrupts it or [illegible] this possible [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] corruption of an immortal reality is wickedness [illegible].[***]

This last sentence is explained a bit further on:

> Indeed, human nature risks stepping towards non-being as a result of its deviation towards what is contrary to nature, but thanks to its return towards what is in conformity with nature it is brought back to its own essence, and it recovers its pure being, which had been blemished by mixture with the passions.[****]

Finally, I quote a third text in which Hierocles contrasts the alteration that of the Pythagorean Carmen aureum, verse 1, with the division of the immortal gods, which are the rational human souls:[*]

[*] Also recently in Simplicius—Disciples (cited by author of the commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* [CAG, XI]—A methodological study?, *Mnemosyne*, 54/2 (2001): pp. 159–[illegible].

[**] See I. Hadot, [illegible], 75–[illegible].

[***] Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum*, XIV, 4, p. 64, 10–15 Kohler.

[****] Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum*, XIV, 2, p. 63, 2 Sodo, 1 Kohler.

[*] Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum* 3, 5–6, pp. 8, 19–20, 14 Kohler.

> The Golden Verses call "immortal gods" those who always and identically intelligize the demiurgic god, who are arranged around the good of this demiurgic god, and who receive from him, indivisibly and naturally, participation in well-being, being and well-being, since they are the impassible and unperverted images [illegible] intellectuating of the demiurgic cause. For it is necessary that the product produce such images of himself as well, and not merely images which are all changeable and subject to the passions. [illegible] Stoics, by these divine words [illegible] to the human souls, which constitute the last kind of rational natures, posit, in contrast, the kind of the immortal gods, of which we are now speaking, is that which is highest. And perhaps it is by opposition to human souls that these gods have been called "immortal gods" insofar as they adhere to the divine happy life [illegible], and they are never in degradation, either in their intellectual essence, or in the goodness of the Father. But the human soul is subject to these passions, [illegible] the good, and recovering its own value [illegible] all that. That is why human souls could reasonably be called "mortal gods" insofar as they participate in the divine happy life, as a result of their flight from the good, and that they live that life once again when they turn towards the good, and in this way they live the divine life, but in that other way they die, and participate in the life of death. [illegible] not towards the good, but in the degradation of well-being. For death for a rational essence is the privation of discernment, or rational intelligence [illegible]

In this text, we again encounter the opposition between souls that always adhere to the Good, and human souls, which can deviate toward evil. We also find in it the theme of the soul's death, which is not unusual in Neoplatonic texts. That first quotation from Hierocles leaves no doubt that, in the third quotation, the death of the rational essence, and therefore of the rational soul, corresponds to an alteration of essence that is manifested in the loss of "well-being" or of virtue. Did this doctrine of the mortality of the human soul's essence reach Hierocles directly from a work by Iamblichus or through the intermediary of his teacher Plutarch of Athens? The fragments and testimonies concerning Plutarch, which H. Tarrant[illegible] has collected and interpreted, do not allow us to answer this question.[illegible]

[illegible] Cicero, *Tusc.*, I, 17. [illegible] Aristotle, *Peri ta kata Rhodon*, *Corpus Hermeticum*, X, 25, XII, 1.

[illegible] Tarrant 1993.

[illegible] However, it is clear [illegible] that Hierocles' commentary on the Pythagorean [illegible] reflect [illegible] Plutarch of Athens

Now that we have recognized the role of Iamblichus in the development of the doctrine of the mutability of the human soul's essence, we must not imagine that he had created this doctrine *ex nihilo*; that is, without having himself on any previous elements. On the contrary, we must be well aware that the problematic in which the discussion of the mutability of the human soul's essence is situated goes back to the origins of Neoplatonism. How can a soul remain a soul, if, while its essence is rational, it falls into irrationality? How can a soul remain a soul, if, when its essence is to be life, it sinks into that kind of death that is vice? A Neoplatonist had to ask himself these types of questions. They are just the ones raised, for instance, by Augustine during the Cassiciacum period, under the influence of Neoplatonists, and more particularly of the *Platonici libri*, which contained writings by Plotinus and Porphyry. Let us read a few texts by Augustine in which the human soul's relation to evil is discussed:

> For indeed, the soul is at fault when it commits evil; it then begins to make less being, and, so to speak, to be worse than it was would when it did not consent to any evil, and remained in virtue. For all the more evil is that which turns away from that which is in the highest degree, in order to tend towards that which is less, so that it will be less. Now, the last stage of this course is to be thought of, for all things, whose being diminishes tend towards absolute nothingness. And although the soul does not reach the point of being nothing, in doing so, nevertheless, it is on its way to that, as soon as it is disposed to the beginning of death. (*Contra Secundinum*, 13)

In this text, we encounter the Neoplatonic identification between being and "well-being," and between non-being and evil. When the soul ceases to be good, it loses its real being, and becomes more and more nullified as it becomes worse, without, however, ever managing to cross

[illegible]

the limit that separates it from nothingness. It will never die completely, but it will undergo a beginning of death.

Let us translate a second text of Augustine, taken from the *De immortalitate animae*. In this treatise, the terms "anima" and "animus" are used indifferently.

> But, it will be said, the very consciousness of reason because of which the soul falls into holly sinner occurs without a loss of its being. Indeed, if the soul remains intensely where it is turned towards reason and attached to it, because it is attached to an immutable thing which is the truth, which has an absolute and primordial way, on the contrary, when the soul turns away from reason, it passes of its being itself to a lesser degree, which is the same as a loss of being. Now, all that is loss of being tends towards nothingness, and inevitably nothing is more able to invoke its nonexistence and death than the act through which it turns away from the Being that is truly nothing. Thus, only the soul tends towards nothingness is tended towards death. Why should death not reach its goal, which is there takes place a loss of being, *determinatio essentiae*? This is what is difficult to say. Here, we adhere to the rest, and we draw the consequent, that is, that which tends towards nothingness dies, or in another words, reaches nothingness. (*De immortal.* VII, 12)

> But if the soul suspends itself from spiritual things and has cast its thoughts and resides in them, the presence of the other objects, of the habit of taking pleasure in sensible things is broken, and is gradually repressed. Once extinguished, the habit was most powerful when we yielded to it, when we nourished it, it was reduced to nothing, but it is in vain, useless. Thus, by these stages which move to a whole, we have to all dissolute motions to which the soul suffers a loss of essence, after recovering the perception of the rational clear sense, our whole life turns back towards God. (*De immortal.* VII, 11, 14).

These last two texts attest explicitly that, for Augustine, the soul's *mutatio* (sin) is an alteration of its essence. Moral degradation corresponds to ontological degradation. A fourth text sets forth this Augustinian conception once again.

> For the soul is nothing by itself; otherwise it would not be subject to change or exposed to the loss of its essence (*interitus determinatio substantiae*). Since it is nothing in itself, it is, being a possession, a substance from God: when it remains in its rank or order, since it might, it lives by the very presence of God in mind and con-

> sensuness. The soul thus possesses the good inside itself. Thus, for it to be filled with pride is to go towards external things and, so to speak, to nullify itself—*nihilescere*, which consists in being less and less. *De musica*, VI, 13, 46.

Did Augustine find this discourse, according to which the rational human soul can undergo an alteration of its essence, but not its complete destruction, in the *Plotinici libri*, or did he himself draw this final consequence from a few preparatory texts by Plotinus and Porphyry? Generally speaking, but with particular regard to the last text from Augustine I have quoted, W. Theiler thought that Augustine's source was found in the *Plotinici libri*, made up above all of texts by Porphyry.[1] L. zum Brunn, who dealt with all the texts from Augustine I have just cited,[2] did not attempt an investigation of sources. Theiler's hypothesis can claim for itself a certain probability from the very fact that, elsewhere, for other texts and according to other historians, it has been supposed with probability bordering on certitude, that Porphyry was Augustine's source.[3]

In what follows, we shall give a few examples of what we can find in Plotinus. The theme of *magis* and *minus esse* is stated clearly in the following text:

> [W]e are more, when we tend towards the One, and well being, is there; but being far from him is nothing, rather even being less *esse*. VI, 9, 9, 11–13.

Did Plotinus, from a certain point of view or at a determinate moment of his life, go so far as to accept the mortality of the soul, as did Augustine? The following text suggests as much:

> But if the soul goes completely astray as far as complete wickedness, then it no longer has wickedness as an accident, but it exchanges its nature for the nature of a rational "thing" (*res*), which is inferior, for wickedness that is not mingled with some contrary is still human. It does, then, as it seems, not merit life, and death for it, since it is still plunged within the body, as in some mire, to be surfeited with it, and even when it is left the body, to be there until it rises back up and somehow manages to get away from the slough. This is the

[1] W. Theiler, 1933, p. 27, where the text by Augustine is cited, *Contra Iul.* 2,29. But Theiler does not discuss the discrepancy of the two quotations.

[2] L. zum Brunn, 1900.

[3] Porphyry's influence on the Augustinian text is clear. For this issue, cf. Plotinus, *Enn.*, II, 1, 5, 20–25.

> meaning of the expression "to go down into Hades, there to fall deeply asleep" [Plato, *Republic*, 534c] (*Hier.*, I, 8, 13, 18–26)

In the phrase καὶ ἐκφυγὼν σύνοικον τὸν χωρὶς ἡδονῆς, the expression "ἐκφυγόντος" is taken from Plato's *Parmenides* (138bc) and has a particularly strong meaning. The "other nature" is the "alien nature," or the nature that is contrary (cf. Plotinus, *Enneads*, I, 6, 5, 37; I, 6, 6, 221). This text cannot be understood otherwise than in the sense that the soul changes in its essence.

From Porphyry, we may cite the following texts:

> For the essence whose being consists in life, and whose very attribute is life, death consists in a certain inversion of life, and not in absolute privation of life, because, for it, even affections are made to and lead to the complete absence of life. (*Sent.*, XXIII, p. 34, 1–4 Lamberz)

> For those who are capable of advancing by intelligence to their essence, and to know their essence, and to recover themselves in this very knowledge and in the consciousness of this knowledge, according to the union of the knower and the known, for them, once they are present to themselves, being is also present. But for those who stray from their being towards other things, since they are absent from themselves, being is also absent. (*Sent.*, XI, p. 30, 16–31, 2 Lamberz)

These texts from Augustine, Plotinus, Porphyry, and Hierocles have a common denominator: when the rational human soul turns towards entities that are ontologically superior to it, and participates in them, it is completely what it *is*, and what it *must be* by its nature. When, however, it turns away from the beings superior to it, and away from itself, as it advances towards matter and sinks within it, it descends life is lessened, it becomes evil, and it dies, not completely, but in a sense. The object of its participation determines its moral quality and the degree of purity of its being, as well as the integrity of its essence.

I do not know any of the small number of texts by Porphyry that have been preserved, that declare *expressis verbis* that the rational human soul can change in its essence; yet the presence of this doctrine in Augustine makes it probable that some such texts existed. In any case, in a fragment of his treatise *On the soul against Boethos*,[18] we find the

[18] Porphyry, in Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, XI, 28, 4–5, vol. II, p. 84 Mras = fr. 242, p. 280, 24–27 Smith: "Since of the soul does not at all resemble what is non-

ides that leads to the doctrine of the mutability of the essence of the human soul; that is, that the soul's activities follow from its essence, that the essence changes when the activities change, and vice versa.

I believe I have shown the commitment of this problem, which is linked to the fact that the rational human soul can pass from virtue to vice, approach the divine and move away from it, and vice versa. It is understandable that, in the course of the history of Neoplatonic philosophy, the questions regarding this problem were raised with more and more precision, and that the answers also became more and more precise, detailed, and systematic without, I believe, gaining in clarity and persuasion. In this development, Iamblichus is an important link; yet as far as the doctrine of the mutability of the essence of the soul is concerned, he does not appear to be an innovator without any precursors.

[illegible]

Let us now return to the demiurge of the universe. We have already learned that, according to Hierocles, the demiurge creates in an immutable way by his very being, by his thought, and by his will alone, and that he includes within himself three different levels of demiurgic causes.[illegible] We also know that the demiurge, for Hierocles, is situated on the level

[illegible]

[illegible] Hierocles, chapter III, sec. 4–5, pp. 24–26.

of the *Noûs*.[illegible] We have seen that all these features that Hierocles attributes to the demiurge are found in all the Neoplatonists. Yet we have not yet interpreted the last phrase of the passage cited on page 50: "But the god who is their father and demiurge reigns as king over them all," and of the parallel passage from codex 251: "But the god who is their creator (κτιστής) and father reigns as king over them all."[illegible] The phrase "creator and father," which Hierocles applies to the demiurge, indicates that Hierocles does have in mind the demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus*, for the demiurge of the *Timaeus* is also called "creator and father."[illegible] In addition, nothing is more usual in a text of Platonic inspiration than to call the demiurge "king," since this appellation is the result of a learned combination of several texts of Plato[illegible] and of various attempts to harmonize them with the *Republic*.[illegible] In Neoplatonic texts, we find a multitude of phrases, always similar, of which I will cite only one, used by Iamblichus, as an example: "the intellect, leader and king of beings and demiurgic cause of the universe."[illegible]

Besides these reflections of an exegetical nature, the title of "king" given to the demiurge is, for a Neoplatonist, laden with the encounter of Hellenistic research on the ideal government, for Hellenistic thought, royalty implied a government that respects the laws of the city, by opposition to tyranny, which knows only arbitrary procedures. Xenophon's Socrates (*Memor.* IV, iv, 12) already distinguished the king from the tyrant in this way. The ideal king is thus essentially legal monarchy; but he does not act like a blind, impersonal law, incapable of discerning what is best and most just in each individual case. On the contrary, he is a kind of living law (ἔμψυχος νομός), a law in conformity with nature, that emanates from his own eminent wisdom. The king is not only just, but is in addition benevolent. His philanthropia makes him take care of his subjects like a father cares for his children. It is

[illegible] This is already evident from the fact that Hierocles [illegible] the demiurge [illegible] the hypostases of the soul, [illegible] in addition [illegible] [illegible] Bekker, vol. VII, p. [illegible] [illegible] Bekker, vol. VII, p. [illegible] [illegible] Bekker, vol. VII, p. [illegible] [illegible] Bekker, vol. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Theophr. Enkomion, vol. 2 [illegible] Bekker, vol. III, p. 127 [illegible], vol. 251, [illegible] Bekker, vol. VII, p. 192 [illegible]

[illegible] Plato, *Tim.*, 28c [illegible]

[illegible] Plato, *Tim.*, 28c, 41a [illegible] Letter II

[illegible] Porphyry, *Vit. Pythag.* [illegible] III, p. [illegible], 17 DidM

[illegible] Iamblichus, *De myst.* [illegible] 22, 1 [illegible]

C. F. H. Hadot, 1978, vol. [illegible]

this Hellenistic image of the ideal king that Philo applies to God and Hierocles to the demiurge, when he speaks of his providence, an image that enables us to understand the expression "paternal royalty" that Hierocles attributes to the providence of the demiurge-king.[illegible]

In his commentary on the *Carmen aureum*, Hierocles, commenting on verse 61, identifies the demiurge of the *Timaeus*—"creator and father of this universe," with Zeus and Zeus of the *Pythagoreans*.[illegible] Proclus, for his part, assimilates him to the Zeus of Homer and of Orpheus, to the decade of the Pythagoreans[illegible] and to the "Father of men and gods" of the *Chaldean Oracles*:

> And this demiurge is celebrated, he says, by Plato, and by Orpheus and by the Oracles, as the supreme creator and father of the Universe. "Father of men and gods," who engenders the multitude of the Gods, but also ends the cycle, so that there may be generations of men, as the *Timaeus* discusses.[illegible]

This identification of the demiurge with Zeus as "all of Hellenic theology," as Proclus says,[illegible] seems already to have been sketched by Iamblichus. Proclus tells us that Iamblichus had written a treatise entitled "On the Discourse of Zeus in the *Timaeus*," where he drew a parallel between Plato's demiurge and the Third Intellect of the Pythagoreans.[illegible] We also have the testimony of Hermias,[illegible] who cita-

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

cizes Iamblichus for not having distinguished this *Zeus*, that is, the demiurge of the *Timaeus*, from the *Zeus* mentioned in Plato's *Phaedrus*. Hermias himself, in agreement with the *Chaldaean Oracles*, assigns to the *Zeus* of the *Phaedrus* a place lower than that of *Zeus* the demiurge.[1]

In the metaphysical system of the Neoplatonists, however, this *Zeus* of Hellenic theology, identified with the demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus* and called "king" and "creator and father," was far from occupying the first place in the hierarchy. In general, we can say that neither Plotinus, nor Porphyry, nor Iamblichus, Syrianus, Hermias, nor Proclus made the demiurge the supreme god of their theological systems; instead, the precise place occupied by the demiurge varied over time. Moreover, it was precisely because of the effort to assimilate various foreign systems to Platonism, such as the *Orphica*, Pythagoreanism, and the *Chaldaean Oracles*, that the Neoplatonists after Plotinus found themselves obliged, on the one hand, to multiply and subdivide ontologically the hypostases after the One and above all the hypostases of the Noûs, and, on the other hand, to situate the demiurge ever lower on the hierarchical scale of deities.[2] The attributions of "king" and "father" do not imply the contrary; that is, they do not designate in and of themselves the supreme god, as might be implied by the analogy with social and family status, for the late Neoplatonic system was familiar with several "fathers," and several "kings." For Syrianus and Proclus, the demiurge of the *Timaeus* is the fifth in the series of kings,[3] and the third of the fathers.[4] For Iamblichus, this demiurge seems to have been identical to the third king of Plato's *Second Letter*.[5]

We have seen that Proclus identified the demiurge with the Pythagorean decade. Hermeias, for his part, identifies him with the triad of these same Pythagoreans.

[1] Hermeias, *In Phaedr.* p. [illegible], 250 [illegible]. We [illegible] Hermeias' [illegible] theogonies, on the [illegible] Attis [illegible] the [illegible] transferred to *Zeus*, that is, the *Zeus* of the *Phaedrus* [illegible] the *Chaldaean Oracles* [illegible] levels, of whom [illegible] Hermeias [illegible].

[2] Hermeias, [illegible] on Matter, or Chaos [illegible] Neoplatonic [illegible] pp. [illegible].

[3] Proclus, *In Tim.* [illegible] I, p. 314, 2[illegible] p. [illegible]; cf. Proclus, *In Tim.* [illegible] I, p. 314, 2[illegible] p. [illegible].

[4] Proclus [illegible] "father" [illegible] the "Creator and Father," and the "[illegible] father." [illegible] *In Tim.* [illegible] I, p. 111, 250 [illegible] III, p. 205, [illegible].

[5] [illegible] Proclus [illegible] that Iamblichus [illegible] *Zeus* [illegible] Proclus [illegible] the Pythagoreans [illegible] Syrianus [illegible] II, p. [illegible] and [illegible] Westerink, "Damascius' Commentary on Plato's Second Letter and the Platonic Tradition," in Proceedings [illegible] vol. II, pp. [illegible] ff., especially pages [illegible] and following.

> "The author of the *Golden Verses*," he writes, "[illegible] declares that the tetrad, [illegible] which is the source of the sempiternal cosmic arrangement, is identical with the demiurgical god."[illegible]

Immediately afterwards, he wonders how this is possible. To answer this question, he gives a brief summary of Pythagorean arithmology,[illegible] whence it results that the tetrad is the power of the decade. The decade represents "detailed" perfection, while the tetrad represents "unified" perfection. The tetrad is the arithmetical mean between the monad and the hebdomad: $1 + 3 = 4$; $4 \times 3 = 7$. The monad and the hebdomad have the most beautiful and excellent properties of all numbers, for the monad, being the principle of all numbers, unites within itself all the powers of all numbers, whereas the hebdomad, which is "motherless" and "virgin," has the dignity of the monad in secondary rank:[illegible]

> Since the tetrad [illegible] between the unengendered monad and the motherless hebdomad, it is [illegible] the power of those that generate individuals [illegible] the only one of the numbers within the decad that [illegible] generated by some number and generates some [illegible] the decad, [illegible] generate the tetrad, and the tetrad, coming [illegible] completes [illegible] number right. The first cell, [illegible] the tetrad, but the point is analogous to the monad, and the [illegible] departs from [illegible] and goes [illegible] the spe[illegible] appropriate to the tetrad, for the [illegible] of all things [illegible] the tetrad is the demiurgic power of all things [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible]

An initial result leaps to the eyes after reading these texts. If Hierocles identifies the tetrad and the demiurge with such arguments, he cannot conceive of the demiurge as the supreme god. In the argument we have just summarized, the tetrad is explicitly intermediate position. In particular, Hierocles divides up the Pythagorean classification of numbers within the decade into four categories: those that engender without being engendered (1); those that engender and are engendered ($2 = 4$); those that are engendered and do not engender ($5 = 8$); and those that do not engender and are not engendered ($6 = 7$).[illegible] Obviously, in this

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] II, 32, p. [illegible] Wrobel.

classification the number four appears as superior to the unengendered monad. If the demiurge is identified with the tetrad, it is of course because it is engendered by a superior hypostasis that corresponds to the monad, but is not necessarily the One, and because it engenders inferior hypostases in its turn. The demiurge thus occupies a median position; that is, it represents a median hypostasis.

In the second place, we note here again that Hierocles indulges in the same kind of speculations as the late Neoplatonists. Proclus identified the demiurge or "Creator and Father" with the decade, but he identified the "Father and Creator," the second of the "Fathers," with the tetrad and the first of the "Fathers," who is "Father only," with the monad.[1] As we see, Proclus' demiurge is thus placed a lot lower in the hierarchy of beings than Hierocles' demiurge. This complication corresponds to the overall tendency of the evolution of Neoplatonism.

11. *Hierocles' Demiurge Considered as Supreme Principle*

Now here does Hierocles tell us the exact place he reserves for his demiurge in the hierarchy of beings? Taken in isolation, all the demiurge's designations, such as Nous, father, creator, king, Zeus, and tetrad, are open to multiple interpretations with regard to the demiurge's exact place within this hierarchy.

One thing is certain, however: this place cannot be the first. First of all, as we have seen, Hierocles' demiurge has a triadic structure, perhaps still further complicated by subdivisions. In order for the demiurge to be the supreme cause, he would have had to be simple, but because he is characterized by internal multiplicity — or a structure that is, moreover, typically Neoplatonic — the logic inherent to Platonic philosophy demands that he occupy an inferior place. Moreover, as we have seen, Hierocles does not hesitate to assimilate his demiurge to the tetrad, or the number four, and he describes this tetrad in terms that all imply a middle position, which therefore presuppose the existence of one or more entities prior to this demiurgic tetrad.[2]

Let us add that all the other features of Hierocles' philosophy, which Photius' summaries and the *Commentaries on the Golden Verses* allow us to glimpse, reveal themselves as purely Neoplatonic. Better yet, they are close to Iamblichus, and we have not found any element that allows us to distinguish Hierocles from surrounding Neoplatonism. Matter as

[1] Proclus, *In Tim.*, vol. 3, p. 126, 16–29 (Diehl).

[2] The anthropological purpose of Stobaeus' description of the demiurge as tetrad is hotly will be interpreted in chapter III, sec. 12 A.

engendered; the demiurge as creating by his being, his thought, and his will; the demiurge counted among the immobile causes; the three classes of rational souls; their distinction without confusion; their vehicles; the means of purification of the rational human soul and its vehicle; — the inability of rational human souls to participate directly in the Intellect: this entire series is typically Neoplatonic and to a large degree, characteristic of the development that Neoplatonism had reached between Iamblichus and Proclus. None of this reveals any compromise with Christianity, and it does not indicate a return to Middle Platonism.

Yet how can we explain the fact that Hierocles never names the One, or any hypostasis higher than the demiurge, either from implicitly, either in his treatise *On Providence*, or in his commentary on the *Carmen aureum*? Why does he not set forth all the details of his systematic and total? The explanation is easy to find. As far as the seven books of Hierocles' treatise *On Providence* are concerned, Photius gives us two summaries of them, which do not fill twenty pages in octavo. How can we know if this omission is due to the fact that Hierocles did not mention the hypostasis higher than the demiurge in these seven books or to the fact that Photius did not take the trouble to recount all the details of Hierocles' theological system. Because we possess neither a systematic treatise on theology nor a commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* written by Hierocles, it is impossible for us to make any certain deductions. As far as the commentary on the *Carmen aureum* is concerned, I would say the following. In it, the *Carmen aureum* only deals with the gods of the cult and with Zeus, the father of these gods, and therefore with gods who, according to the Neoplatonic system of his contemporaries, dwelled in the sphere of the Nous. It is not in passage, in his commentary, Hierocles did not go beyond this level. We must not forget, moreover, that the commentary on the *Carmen aureum* was intended only for students of philosophy who were at the very first stage of the study of philosophy. It would have been pedagogically inappropriate to wish to set forth all the details of the Neoplatonic theological system in all its complexity. Hence, even if it is such, moreover, at the end of his commentary, [illegible]

In conclusion, nothing in Hierocles' doctrine of matter, souls, and the demiurgeship allows us to distinguish him from surrounding Neoplatonists. On the contrary, in everything Hierocles has to say on these themes, we find precise, characteristic, and structured details, which

[illegible]

correspond precisely to the Neoplatonism of his time, and are very close to Iamblichus. In particular, his doctrine of the demiurge quite clearly implies the existence of higher hypostases, which extend from the One to the first subdivisions of the Noûs. In order to prove these claims, we shall give a detailed interpretation of Hierocles' arithmological passage contained in his commentary on the *Carmen aureum*.

2. *The Hypostatical Powers and Demiurge in Hierocles' Philosophical System*

2.1. *An Interpretation of Hierocles' Text on the Hypostatical Numbers*

At the conclusion of the preceding chapter, we mentioned, in the context of our interpretation of the fragments from Hierocles' treatise *On Providence*, some reasons why Hierocles' demiurge cannot be the supreme principle of his ontological system. On that occasion, we alluded briefly to a text from the commentary on the *Carmen aureum*, where Hierocles identifies the demiurge with the tetrad, or rather with the number four.[1] We shall comment on this text in detail here, taking up the essential parts of two articles I wrote in 1986 and 1993 in response to S. Annoulat, which have lost none of their currency.

In a book published in 1980, entitled *Le Néoplatonisme alexandrin. Hiérocles d'Alexandrie*, S. Annoulat partially accepted my demonstration, admitting "that nothing allows Hierocles' doctrine on matter, souls, and the luminous bodies, to be distinguished from the Neoplatonism that surrounded him. Thus, Hierocles is naturally located between Iamblichus, on the one hand, and Syrianus and Proclus on the other" (p. 486). However, he refused to accept my thesis that the demiurge did not represent the first ontological principle for Hierocles, but a principle derived from a superior cause. For Annoulat, Hierocles' supreme Godess, on the contrary, the creative Intelligence, as it was for Origen the pagan, but also for the Christians. Hierocles' theology would thus somehow be simultaneously archaic, pre-Plotinian, and influenced by Christianity with regard to the highest principle; and/or somehow modern and post-Iamblichean as far as souls and these luminous bodies are concerned.

There was an inconsistency here that was, to say the least, surprising. Yet the fundamental problem remained that of the exact position of the demiurge within Hierocles' system. For if Hierocles assimilates him explicitly to the tetrad, he cannot be the first principle, as I showed in my German article "Ist die Lehre des Hierokles vom Demiurgen

1. Elsewhere, pp. 89ff.
2. Hadot, 1986, 1993.

christlich-beeinflußt?"[1] Aujoulat hopes to elude my arguments by entrenching himself with writing (p. 63):

> With regard to the Tetrad, which represents the demiurge in the *Commentaries on the Golden Verses*, according to I. Hadot it occupies an "intermediate position," for it is "midway between the unengendered monad and the transitive hebdomad." It is inferior to the unengendered monad. These remarks, with respect to them, which are rather rash to take account of the fact that, for Hierocles, the tetrad "represents the tetractys, the sacred number of the Pythagoreans, 'source of the things,' and that the Alexandrians, in addition, wishes to compare the tetrad or tetractys, as well as its generative property, with regard to other numbers, in opposition to the sacrificial qualities of the unengendered monad and the mathematicians." Perhaps what Hierocles says about the monad is brief, contingent, whereas he devotes comprehensive attention to the tetrad. He does not seem to have placed the monad above the tetrad, which leads to the conclusion, it seems, to illustrate the meaning of Hierocles' arithmology. Hadot admits, moreover, that "it must be admitted as likely that the monad did not once represent the highest principle for Hierocles," and that "the comparison with other Neoplatonists leads us to this conclusion."[2]

Later, Aujoulat took up the same theme once again: "I. Hadot herself admits . . . that 'it must be admitted as possible that the monad is not once represented as the highest principle for Hierocles'" (p. 132). In fact, my German text does not "admit" anything of the kind, but the German phrase in question must be translated as follows: "It must be considered probable that it is *not* even the monad that represents the highest principle for Hierocles." I mean that it can be legitimately supposed that, for Hierocles, it is not even the monad, but the One that transcends the monad, which represents the first principle; and, moreover, the case for other Neoplatonists. Aujoulat has confused the adverbial expression I had used, "*nicht einmal*" (not even) with another German expression: "*nicht ein einziges Mal*" (not even once). The context, in which it was said that Hierocles knew of principles higher than the tetrad identified with the demiurge, namely the triad, the dyad, and the monad, should, however, have set him on the right track, but Aujoulat probably did not understand the context, either.

I was thus obliged to take up my argumentation once again, developing it and specifying the relations between the tetrad and the tetrac

[1] I. Hadot, 1978.

tys in Hierocles, on the one hand, and on the other between the monad and the first principle.

Let us therefore begin by rereading the text by Hierocles that deals with the tetrad, a passage from his commentary on the *Carmen aureum* devoted to the explanation of verses 47 and 48.[*] In allow the reader to form an exact notion of Hierocles' usage, I shall translate the Greek word *monas* by "monad," *heis* by "one," *dyas* by "dyad," *duo* by "two," *tetras* by "tetrad," *tessares* by "four," *tetraktys* by "tetractys," *deka* by "decad," *eikas* by "eikad," and so on, without carrying out an unjustifiable measure:

> At the same time as he [*scil.* the author of the *Carmen aureum*] swears by the contemplation of the finest states [*hexeis*] of the soul [*scil.* the tetractys], he thereby shows that the tetrad as well, which is the source of the sempiternal cosmic arrangement, and he declares that it is identical with the demiurgical god. In what sense this god is a tetrad, you will clearly discover from the *Hieros Logos* attributed to Pythagoras, in which the god is explained as the number of numbers. For all beings come into existence by means of his sempiternal will; it is clear that that number which is in each total of beings already pertains to the cause within him and to this godly, and that the four number is there; for it comes about from there. Now, the interval accomplished by monads is the decad, for it is by one who wishes to continue to count comes back to one, two, three, and he reaches a second decad with a view to the fulfillment of the eikad; twenty, and likewise a third, that he might reach "thirty," and seventh, and he reaches the ninth decad and arrives at nine hundred. Again, he reaches "one hundred ten" in the same way, and then, by the escalating of the interval of the decad, he may proceed to infinity. The power overflowing out of the decad is the tetrad, for prior to the decad's perfection *Zeus* [*the god*] *elevates* that to the decad, a kind of unified perfection. *Zeus* [*the god*] *elevates* is observed in the tetrad; for the total sum of the decad comes about from the addition of the number 1 from the monad to the tetrad. For one plus two plus three plus four add up to the decad. And the tetrad is the arithmetical mean between the monad and the hebdomad, for in a way it exceeds and is exceeded by the same number, since it falls short of the hebdomad by a triad, but surpasses the monad by a triad. Now, the

[*] These two verses are as follows: "By the swear of Pythagoras, who gave to our soul the tetractys, source of ever-flowing nature." Hierocles' commentary is found in pp. [illegible], [illegible] Kalinka edition.

[*] Annotator's version follows in modified text, see below, p. [illegible] with n. [illegible]

[**] [illegible], see below, p. [illegible]

> characteristic features of the monad and the hebdomad are the best and the finest. For the monad, as principle of all numbers, contains within itself the powers of all, whereas the hebdomad, as motherless and virgin, has the value of the monad at a secondary level. [illegible] neither generates nor is engendered from one of the numbers within the decad—as 4 from twice 2, and 6 from twice 3, and 8 from twice 4, and 9 from thrice 3, and 10 from twice 5—nor does it generate any of the numbers within the decad, as 2 generates 4 and 3 generates 9 and 5 generates 10. But since the tetrad lies between the ungenerated monad and the motherless hebdomad, it has gathered together the powers of those that generate and those that are generated, and it is the only one of the numbers within the decad that both is generated by some number and generates one. For the dyad, by doubling itself, generates the tetrad, and the tetrad, coming about twice, completes the number eight. The first reflection of the solid is also found in the tetrad. For the point is analogous to the monad, and the line to the dyad, for it departs from something and goes towards something, and the surface is appropriate to the triad, for the most elementary of rectilinear figures is the triangle. But the solid is proper to the tetrad. For the first pyramid is observed in the tetrad, for the triangle [illegible] the base of the pyramid, as its foundation, while the point is added to it as its vertex. And in us too there is [illegible]: intellect, science, opinion, and sensation, for all beings are judged by intellect or science or opinion or sensation. In general, the tetrad, [illegible] things, the seasons of the year, the ages of men, [illegible] as we have said, the tetrad is [illegible] of all these [illegible] intelligible gods [illegible]. This same tetrad has been handed down [illegible] Pythagoras himself, by whom the author of these verses swears [illegible] of truth.

One more word on the subject of translation. Following current usage in the context of the Idea-Numbers of the Old Academy and the doctrinal tradition of "number mysticism" that derives therefrom, I have translated the terms *monas*, *duas*, *trias*, *tetras*, and so on,

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[illegible]

by "monad," "dyad," "triad," "tetrad," and so on. Yet this is not without a certain ambiguity: the English term "tetrad," for instance, no longer means exactly the same thing as in ancient Greek. If we consult Liddel-Scott's Greek-English dictionary or Bailly's Greek-French dictionary, we find the following indications for the word "τετρας":[*] "1) the number 4; 2) the fourth day of the first part of the month (in a bipartite division), or of the decade or of the week; 3) a duration of 4 days." Liddel-Scott adds "the four quarters of the moon." Yet the *Grand Robert de la Langue Française* gives for the word "tetrad" the general explanation "group of four," before going on to speak of the special applications of this term in the sciences. "Group of four" does not necessarily mean that we have to do with the assemblage of four equal elements — four days, four quarters — as is the case for the Greek term, and the principal signification, that of "the number four," has completely disappeared. To be completely clear, I should therefore always have translated "tetrad" by "the number four," "triad" by "the number three," and so forth. For instance, the beginning of the text should be translated as follows: "At the same time as he will, the author of the *Carmen aureum* swears by the contemplation of the three states of the soul, he theologizes about the number four as well, which is the source of the sempiternal cosmic arrangements, and he declares that it is identical with the demiurgical god. In what sense this god is the number four, you will clearly discover," and so on. Analogously, the subtitles Περὶ ἀριθμῶν, Περὶ ἀριθμῶν, Περὶ τετράδος, of the anonymous treatise *Theologoumena arithmetikes*, attributed to Iamblichus, are translated as precisely as possible by "On the number two," "On the number three," "On the number four," and so on, and the texts of the chapters show that this translation is adequate. In addition, the term "τετρακτύς" among the ancient Pythagoreans and elsewhere has the general meaning of "group of four unequal or different elements"[**] and consequently also the special meaning of "group of the first four numbers," whose sum is ten. Since, in our text, Hierocles assimilates the tetractys of the *Carmen aureum* to the tetrad, the question may be raised of whether, for Hierocles, the meaning of the term "τετρακτύς" takes precedence over that of "τετρας" — this is Mr. Aujoulat's opinion[***] — or whether, on the contrary, the tetractys takes over the meaning of "tetrad." In other words, we may wonder whether, for Hierocles, the tetractys of the *Carmen aureum* is simply the multi-

[*] I reproduce Bailly's indications, which are different from those of Liddel-Scott.

[**] Burkert treats in extenso the tetractys in his principal work (cf. below, p. 42, with n. 29).

[***] Aujoulat, Irénée, 1234 [illegible] "[illegible] tetractys [illegible] the tetractys had the same value as the tetrad."

ber four. Let us look at what the text says: for instance, the tetrad is said to be "the arithmetical mean between the monad and the hebdomad"; but it could not be their arithmetical mean if it represented the sum of numbers from one to four. To take another example, among many others: "The dyad, by doubling itself, engenders the tetrad, and the tetrad, coming about twice, completes the number eight." How could all this be possible if the tetrad were not the number four, but the sum total of the first four numbers, and therefore in fact the number ten? The whole of the text just quoted and translated demonstrates without any ambiguity that for Hierocles, the "tetrad," as the "tetractys," is the number four.

This entire text is intended to comment on the following passage from the *Golden Verses*, verses 47–48; cf. above, p. 65: "By him [scil. Pythagoras] who has given to our soul the tetractys, source of inexhaustible nature." In his commentary, Hierocles assimilates the "tetractys" to the tetrad [= the number four] and to the demiurge, and "nature" to the sempiternal ordering of the world. We may note that at the beginning of his exposition, Hierocles immediately assimilates the tetractys to the tetrad, without himself adopting the term "tetractys" again. It is only near the end of his praise of the tetrad that Hierocles—only once—uses the word "tetractys," in order to stay close, as it were, to the text on which he is commenting. This may be an instance of *Ringkomposition*, or circular composition.

The exposition develops through the following stages. First, basing himself on Pythagorean *theosophy*, Hierocles proves that the tetrad is identical with the demiurge, insofar as it is the number of numbers. Hierocles then situates the tetrad with respect to the other numbers, first to the decad: the tetrad is the power of the decade, then to the monad and the hebdomad: the tetrad is the arithmetical mean between these two numbers, which engendering and engendered; and, finally, with regard to the monad, the dyad and the triad: whereas the monad corresponds to the point, the dyad to the line, and the triad to the surface, the tetrad corresponds to the solid, or the first pyramid. We then find a brief exposition on the importance of groups of "four" within reality. We are thus brought back to our starting point: the tetrad appears as the cause of all things, an intelligible god who produces that visible god known as the world.

[illegible]

Let us therefore examine the various points of this exposition. First of all, Hierocles alludes to the *Sacred Discourse* attributed to Pythagoras: "In what sense," he says, "this god is a tetrad, you will clearly discover from the *Hieros Logos* attributed to Pythagoras, in which this god is celebrated as the number of numbers." Mr. Aujoulat (p. 124), who follows the text of Mullach's 1866 edition, instead of utilizing the only worthwhile text—that is, Kohler's 1974 critical edition—cites the beginning of the phrase as follows: "But how is the Tetrad God?" Aujoulat remarks in a note that "Kohler has retained the reading: Θεός, ὁ τετρὰς οὐδὲν οὐδενός;" this, like the punctuation, is entirely false here. Kohler has not retained one reading among other valid readings, but he has edited the only text that the independent witnesses allow to be established. I refer to the critical apparatus of Kohler's edition as well as to his excellent *Textgeschichte von Hierokles' Kommentar zum "Goldenen Gedicht" der Pythagoreer*, which also contains an entire chapter dealing with the differences and shortcomings of Mullach's edition. Obviously, this choice of a bad reading has the result of turning all the data upside down; the quite determinate god—this god to whom Hierocles' tetrad corresponds in the pantheon of Neoplatonic gods—has thus, for Aujoulat, become simply God. By working on an outdated text, Mr. Aujoulat has invalidated the bases of his interpretation right from the start.

The *Sacred Discourse*, or *Discourse on the Gods*, as it is also entitled,[1] is a pseudepigraphic work, as we know today. This *Sacred Discourse*, in Doric prose, must not be confused with another *Sacred Discourse* in hexameters, also attributed to Pythagoras. According to H. Diels's collection of the testimonies and fragments concerning this text, the *Sacred Discourse* is mentioned rather late, and exclusively by Neoplatonists. The first person to quote it is Iamblichus, from the end of the third century to the first half of the fourth century. In the fifth century, Syrianus and Hierocles, who were contemporaries and probably classmates—both were students of Plutarch of Athens—refer to this work, as does Syrianus' student Proclus.[2] First quoted in text by Iamblichus, where the subject is the presumed sources of the *Sacred Discourse*:[3]

[1] [illegible]

[2] [illegible]

[3] [illegible]

Iamblichus, [illegible] XXVIII, [illegible] Text edited and trans. [illegible] Michael von Albrecht, [illegible] Zurich, 1963.

> If someone wishes to know from what source Plotinus imitated the Pythagorean and Aristotelian point, I must be said that in Orpheus there existed a clear model for the Pythagorean theology of numbers. Therefore, [illegible] Porphyry took his point of departure from Orpheus, where he wrote the *Theologumena of the Poets*, which [illegible] because it was derived from the most ancient poem in Orpheus, whether this work really by Pythagoras is not [illegible] whether it is by Porphyry or by Pythagoras [illegible] simply inserted by some [illegible] who are [illegible] Porphyry is [illegible] and [illegible] to his daughter [illegible] *Theologumena of the Poets* [illegible] Porphyry [illegible] Thus the discussion [illegible] Porphyry, [illegible] Neoplatonism, [illegible] from Aristotelian [illegible] Orpheus, [illegible] Porphyry [illegible] Pythagoras [illegible] Porphyry [illegible] Neoplatonism [illegible] Porphyry [illegible] the Neoplatonic [illegible] but [illegible] the gods [illegible]

Proclus alludes to this passage in his commentary on the *Timaeus*, where he says:

> [illegible] from [illegible] Porphyry [illegible] Orpheus [illegible] Pythagoras [illegible]

In his *Platonic Theology*, Proclus insists once again on the fact that the ancient theologians [illegible] Greeks through the mysteries of Orpheus. Pythagoras [illegible] Aglaophamus, and Porphyry [illegible] in his commentary on the first book of Euclid's *Elements*.[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Proclus makes the Platonic doctrine of Idea-Numbers depend explicitly on the teaching concerning the gods given by Pythagoras in his *Sacred Discourse*.

The testimonies cited so far have enabled us to understand that the *Sacred Discourse* contained a theology that placed the hierarchy of the gods in relation with certain numbers. Five testimonies and fragments from Syrianus' commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* tend in the same direction. I shall limit myself to translating two of them:

> "If one were able to follow Pythagoras' *Sacred discourse*, he would find all the ranks of monads and of numbers not celebrated uninterruptedly. . . [illegible] and Pythagoras himself, when he explains all the numbers from the monad to the decad, expands upon this with ease and well, at simultaneously theological and physical, without indulging in a paltry or cold presentation."[illegible]

In two other passages of his commentary, Syrianus gives precise examples of the equations between gods and numbers contained in the *Sacred Discourse*: here, the monad is identified with Protean, and the dyad with Chaos.[illegible] I add one more testimony from Iamblichus,[illegible] which emphasizes as much as one could wish the progressive abasement in the ontological rank of the ideal numbers from one to four, and of the four mathematical sciences that correspond to them:

> [M]oreover, if number is the ideal type [illegible] of beings, and if the tetrad, so to speak, the elements of number are the first terms as far as the tetrad, the above-mentioned characteristic features would be in the monad as well as the reflections of the four sciences: that of arithmetic in the monad, of music in the dyad, of geometry in the triad, of the science of spheres in the tetrad, according to what Pythagoras calls metaphysical tetrad, or *the gods*. Four are also the foundations of wisdom, mathematics, music, geometry, the science of spheres, which have the rank of one, two, three and four."

All these testimonies, as well as those of the texts collected by Theslefl that I have not cited, make it clear that the *Sacred Discourse* dealt with

[illegible] Syrianus, *In Metaph.*, p. 149, [illegible]

[illegible] Syrianus, *In Metaph.*, p. 152, [illegible]

[illegible] Syrianus, *In Metaph.*, p. [illegible]

[illegible] Iamblichus — [illegible] p. 21, [illegible] from Nicomachus' *Theol. arithm.*, [illegible] by A.-J. Festugière, 1948, 28.5. This very important article on the tetrad pythagorean is unknown to N. Vlastos.

a hierarchy of gods situated in parallel with a hierarchy of numbers proceeding from the monad to the decad. Yet the *Sacred Discourse* was not the only pseudo-Pythagorean text studied by the Neoplatonists of the fifth century. There was also the *Hymn to Numbers*, four verses of which are cited once by Syrianus in his commentary on the *Metaphysics* and three times by Proclus in his commentary on the *Timaeus*:

> Number advances, in its progression, it reaches, from the most hidden recesses of the Monad, as far as the sacred Tetrad; then it is the Tetrad that engenders the universal Mother, the all-receiving, the Venerable one, she who imposes a limit on all things, the indefatigable, the Decad whom they call the pure Decad.

This hymn, which, like the *Sacred Discourse*, the Neoplatonists attributed to Pythagoras, presents, as we see, the hierarchy of divine numbers from the monad to the decad. In general, moreover, at least from the time of Moderatus (second half of the first century of our era), all Neopythagorean texts concerning theological number speculations agree with one another on this point: it is, moreover, logical, in making the progression of numbers begin either with the monad or with the One, conceived as the supreme principle. In these circumstances, and given the fact that the *Sacred Discourse* or *Discourse on the Gods* was obviously very widely read, at least in the Neoplatonic milieu of his time, how could Damascius, who refers *expressis verbis* to this same *Sacred Discourse* as a text that clearly defines the exact position of the god who corresponds to the tetrad, namely Dionysus, possibly dare to maintain that this *Discourse* made this god the supreme God? And yet, this is Angelidi's hypothesis.

What, then, does Damascius' reasoning consist in? In affirming, first of all, that Pythagoras identifies the tetrad with the demiurge, and secondly, that the *Sacred Discourse* attributed to Pythagoras explains how the tetrad is "equated" with the demiurge. The first point is implied, it seems, by the expression "source of everflowing nature" used by the *Golden Verses*: "the tetractys, source of everflowing nature." The second point presupposes the following reasoning: the demiurgic god is celebrated by Pythagoras' *Sacred Discourse* as "number of numbers". This is because in each form of beings there is a number, and this number is produced by the first number found within the demiurge. Number flows from up above to

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[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

this world. We note that the first number is not the monad, for according to Hierocles the monad is the "principle of numbers" (in this regard, it is impossible to say, with Mr. Aujoulat [p. 127], that the monad is the number of numbers, especially since Hierocles clearly identifies the tetrad with the "number of numbers"...). As Syrianus says, "It is from the intelligible monad that the first number is spontaneously (*opthos*) proceeds 'from the unutterable hollows of the monad.'"

If we were to judge by the rest of the text of the *Hymn to Numbers* cited by Syrianus, the first number Hierocles mentions—that first number that comes forth from the monad—should be the tetrad, which could be considered as the first number insofar as the procession that begins from the monad stops at the tetrad. Proclus' citation of the *Hymn to Numbers* has the same meaning, and this interpretation might find additional support in the following text by Hermias:

> According to other viewpoints, the number is the tetrad to Pythagoras, for it is the first to have all the harmonies within it ... and because all numbers are also contained within it. The tetrad is the source of all the numbers, for, from it, the numbers ... come forth. The tetrad is accomplished, and the decad is the total number, and, in general, theology calls Dionysus "the tetrad" and "the four-faced."

Yet it is possible that by the expression "the first number" Hierocles means to designate intelligible number in general, from which the numbers within being come forth. This is the sense of "first number" in Iamblichus' treatise *On Pythagoreanism*, V, *On Physical Numbers*.

Let us return to Hierocles' text. This arithmological exposition takes its place within a rich and lengthy tradition of Pythagorean speculation on numbers, which begins with the Old Academy and continues alive down to the end of Neoplatonism. The decisive point in this text is the identification of the demiurge with the tetrad. As we shall see, this identification is characteristic of Hierocles' median position between Iamblichus and Proclus, which I have described in detail above. First, however, let us pause for a moment over the traditional elements of Pythagorean number speculation that we encounter outside the *Sacred*

[illegible] Hierocles, *In Carmen Aureum*, xx, p. 67, 28–[illegible] Hierocles, *In Carmen Aureum*, p. [illegible]

[illegible] Syrianus, *In Metaph.*, p. 146, 11 Kroll.

[illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.*, p. [illegible] (see also the quotation from Amelius, p. [illegible]).

[illegible] Hermias, *In Phaedr.*, p. [illegible], [illegible]

[illegible] Dillon, 1989, appendix: "Theosophistoumenon Iamblichus *On Pythagoreanism* V: Villa Pedesi," p. 2[illegible], n. 24.

[illegible] Cf. Chap. III, [illegible] and Chap. [illegible], n. 1[illegible]

Discourse and the *Hymn to Numbers* in numerous texts, both prior to and later than Hierocles. We begin with the role played by the decad as "interval accomplished by number." "The decad," writes Philo of Alexandria, "is the limit of the infinity of numbers, around which they swing and return as around a turning-point." We find parallel texts in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata*, in the *Placita* of Aetius (written around [illegible]), in Anatolius, in Theon of Smyrna, in Calcidius, in the *Theologumena arithmetica*, and in Johannes Lydus. The most ancient testimony is that of Speusippus.

Another traditional element is the perfection of the decad and the determination of the decad as a perfect number. For instance, we encounter this idea in Porphyry, Hippolytus, and Macrobius. Sextus Empiricus,

Philo, [illegible]

[illegible]

Aetius, [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] number, [illegible] decad. [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Speusippus, [illegible]

Porphyry, [illegible]

Sextus Empiricus, [illegible] "The fourth number, which is composed of the first four, is called by the Pythagoreans, [illegible] for I place [illegible], which is the most perfect number, for once we have reached it, we return to the monad and begin to count all over again."

calculus,[1] Iamblichus,[2] in the *Theologumena arithmeticae*,[3] and in Speusippus.[4] Hierocles (pp. 88, 5ff.) specifies what distinguishes the perfection of the decad from that of the tetrad: the tetrad possesses a perfection ontologically superior to that of the decad: it is "somehow" unified, by contrast with the more diversified perfection of the decad. Hierocles takes care to add "somehow" (*πως*) when describing the unified perfection of the tetrad; this is because he wants to avoid any confusion with an even higher principle that would be unified in the true sense of the word, for the tetrad is not truly unified, like the monad is, but only compared to the decad, which is perfect in accordance with a "detailed development." This means that the decad, by specifying and diversifying the seminal reasons contained in the tetrad, has already moved away, to a greater extent than the tetrad, from the first principle. The same clarification is found in Proclus:[5] "For the tetrad contains all things, and so does the decad, but one contains them unitively, and the other in a separated way; and although the decad contains all that the tetrad contains, yet because it contains them in a separated way, it is less perfect than the tetrad. For that which is closer to the monad is more perfect, and the smaller the quantity, the greater the power (*δυναμις*)." Here, Proclus identifies the tetrad with the Intelligible Living Being, and the decad with the demiurge.

The idea that the tetrad is the power (*δυναμις*) of the decad is also mentioned and commented often in this tradition. Hierocles speaks of it in the same phrase as that in which he distinguishes the perfection of the tetrad from that of the decad (p. 88ff.). Aujoulat (p. 126, n. 1), citing J. Souilhé, thinks that the word *δυναμις* applied to the tetrad means that it is "the fundamental or distinctive property" of the decad; that is, that the tetrad "realizes and expresses" the decad. This explanation is rather obscure; it seems much simpler to consider the use of *δυναμις* in the arithmetical expositions of Philo, for instance, or of Iamblichus, where we discover that *δυναμις* is opposed to *ἐνέργεια*[6] and, most often, to *ἐνεργεια*.[7] We are thus in the presence of a pair of opposites of

[1] See above, n. 264.

[2] Iamblichus, *In Nicomachi arithm.*, p. 4, 1–5, in Pistelli.

[3] [Iamblichus], *Theologumena arithmeticae*, n. 268.

[4] Speusippus, *Fr.* 28, in Tarán.

[5] Proclus, *In Tim.*, I, p. 442, 14–23 (Diehl, trans. Sorabji and Lernould, 1998–1999, 2:331).

[6] Philo, *De opif. mundi*, 47: "For when the decad was created in potency, the tetrad, it seems, was in potentiality."

[7] [Iamblichus], *Theol. arithm.*, p. 53, 13–15 (based on excerpts from Nicomachus): "[The numbers to be attributed to the tetrad are potentially the decad. For in act it is composed of the decad itself, so there is no difference between the tetrad and the decad, and therefore, in a way, between the two decads, the potential one and the actual

Aristotelian origin: power or potentiality and act, but with the difference that for the Neoplatonists, power, compared to act, has a superior ontological reality. Hierocles thus meant that "What the tetrad is in power/potentiality, the decad is in act." We therefore need not wonder, with Mr. Annuliat (p. 128): "In what sense, then, does the tetrad realize the decad?" It is not the tetrad that realizes or concretizes the decad, but the other way around: the decad realizes the tetrad; that is, the decad is an emanation from the tetrad, and is the unfolding of the forces contained within the tetrad. Hierocles himself has said so, moreover, in language which is perfectly clear for a Neoplatonist or someone knowledgeable in their philosophy: "The power of the decad is the tetrad, not prior to the detailed perfection that is in the decad, a kind of undivided perfection as observed in the tetrad."

To prove that the tetrad is the power of the decad, Hierocles mentions the fact that the decad results from the addition of the numbers from one to four (1 + 2 + 3 + 4). This detail, alone or linked with the qualification of the tetrad as a potential decad, is also mentioned very often in parallel texts. For three of the parallel texts we have reproduced in

[illegible]

n. 277—that of Sextus Empiricus, that of Hippolytus, and that of the Anonymous of Photius—the decad is the tetractys. For Hierocles, by contrast, the terms "tetrad" and "tetractys" signify one and the same thing: this is proved by the beginning and the end of the passage from the commentary on the *Carmen aureum*, which I have translated above. Proclus, too, in his commentary on the *Timaeus*,[1] identifies the tetrad of the *Hymn to Numbers* with the tetractys of the *Carmen aureum*. Aetius[2] and Macrobius[3] also assimilate the tetractys of the same Pythagorean oath to the tetrad.

In the following sentence (p. 88, 10ff.), Hierocles affirms that the tetrad constitutes the arithmetical mean between the monad and the hebdomad. The reason for this is, he says, that the tetrad "somehow" (πως) surpasses the monad by the same number by which it is surpassed by the hebdomad. Here again, Hierocles takes care, by the addition of the adverb πως, to specify that the tetrad does not *really* surpass the monad, that is, in an ontological sense, but only "somehow," that is, in quantity, and for a Neoplatonist greater quantity is a clear sign of ontological inferiority. Mr. Aujoulat, who simply reproduces Mommert's old translation, omits the specification, as Mommert does, although it is found even in Mullach's text. In any case, the designation of the tetrad as the arithmetical mean between the monad and the hebdomad should already suffice to show that the tetrad, because of its medial position, cannot be the supreme god.

The mention of the monad and the hebdomad, between which the tetrad is the arithmetical mean, gives Hierocles the opportunity briefly to describe the qualities of both: "The monad," he says, "as the principle of all number, contains within itself the powers of all the numbers." If the monad is the principle of every number, that means beyond all possible doubt that it is the cause that precedes and engenders all other numbers, and that all other numbers depend on it and derive their origin from it. In addition, if the monad contains the powers of all the numbers within itself,[4] we cannot doubt that it also contains within it the power of the tetrad. The monad is potentially the tetrad, as it is potentially every number; analogously, Hierocles had stated above that the tetrad is the power of the decad. Since this implies that the tetrad is

[1] Proclus, *In Tim.* II, p. [illegible], 1–7 Diehl.

[2] Aetius, *Placita*, I, 3, 8 = Diels, *Doxographi Graeci*, 282 Diels. He too identifies the tetrad with the tetractys of the Pythagoreans.

[3] Macrobius, *In somnium Scipio*, I, 14, 19, p. [illegible] Willis: "quaternarium quidem Pythagorei [illegible] intellexerunt [illegible] transeunt [illegible] quaternarium." Quadrinarius, a certain [illegible] in this context the Greek terms τέτρας, τετρά, τέτρασι or τετράδες.

[4] Cf. the text cited in n. 276.

ontologically superior to the decad—which Aupolat admits—the monad is necessarily superior ontologically to all other numbers, including the tetrad. This sentence from Hierocles' commentary should thus be enough by itself to demonstrate the dominate tetrad's dependence on the monad, as well as a good far superior to it. Nevertheless, a reader, pagan or Christian, could have been mistaken on this point, for all ancient authors who mention or use the Pythagorean theory of numbers, like Hierocles, make the monad or the One the supreme principle of all numbers.[illegible] This is required by the logic inherent in the theology of numbers.

Everything that follows in Hierocles' text from page 88, 2 f. only merely confirms our interpretation. Before we come to that, however, let us say a few more words on the hebdomad. Hierocles describes it as being virginal and motherless. In parallel texts, moreover, it is very often dere-

[illegible]

tched with Athena, who burst forth from the head of her father, Zeus, without being engendered by a mother. The hebdomad "is not engendered by any of the numbers contained within the decad"—that is, it is not the result of the multiplication of two numbers, but derives its origin from the monad alone, which is generally conceived as not being a number itself.[11] It is virginal, because it does not give birth through multiplication by another number of the decad or any other number within the decad. Its position within the decad is therefore singular, and in some aspects it resembles that of the monad. This is why Hierocles can say that it "possesses the power of the monad in a secondary way."

Hierocles continues (p. 88, 2-10):

> Yet since the tetrad lies between the unengendered monad and the motherless hebdomad, it has gathered together the powers of those that generate and those that are generated, and it is the only one of the numbers within the decad that both is engendered by using another and engenders one.

In this phrase and the following one (p. 88, 2-5), Hierocles again assigns to the demiurgic tetrad a position ontologically intermediate between the monad and the hebdomad. The demiurgic tetrad is engendered by the dyad, and insofar as it is engendered by it, it can consequently not be the first principle, that from which all things, including the dyad, come forth. For a Neoplatonist, it goes without saying that an engendered god can be only a derived principle. Yet Mr. Aujoulat thinks Hierocles was influenced by Christianity. Is it conceivable that a Christian could have represented the demiurgic or world-creator, God the Father, as having been engendered? A fortiori, could that Christian have seen in the demiurgic the first signs of the maternal? Hierocles attributes to him, in the lines that follow.[12] Instead of taking up Hierocles' text once again, I prefer to cite a parallel text from Philo of Alexandria, which reports the same details. I think it is useful to insist yet again on the fact that the ancient tradition on the theology of numbers is unanimous in making all numbers and all gods derive from the monad or the One. Here is the text in question:

of both the generators and the offspring, for it engends [illegible] and is [illegible] by the three [illegible] engendered. [illegible] number to Soter, the mediator [illegible] the father Zeus." Cf. Clement, *Strom.* [illegible], p. [illegible], [illegible] Philo of Alexandria, *De Fuga*, p. 154, 18–19, II, p. 85, 5, p. 258, 17–20 [illegible], 81.

[12] Cf. the quotations from Iamblichus, Macrobius, and Philo of Alexandria in the preceding note.

> There is another power of the tetrad which is most astonishing to state and to think upon, for it is the first to show the nature of the solid, whereas the numbers that precede it are referred to the incorporeals. For according to the one is named what is called the point in geometry; according to two is the line, for the dyad comes next in the flow of the one, which the line arises through the flow of the point. Now the line is length without breadth, but when the third is added to it, there comes about the surface, which is manifestly conducive to the triad. The surface takes one element with regard to the nature of the solid, namely breadth, which is added to the triad, there comes about the tetrad. I have shown that this number is such a great thing, which from the incorporeal and intelligibles sometimes leads us to have a conception of the corporeal and sensible, the first sensible by nature.[1]

In this text by Philo, as in that by Hierocles, and in the numerous parallel texts cited in the notes, the theologoumena of numbers seem to unfold thus, from a supreme principle that is one without qualifications, the multitude of sensible phenomena of the sensible world can be realized, through several levels of intelligible hypostases. In the passage from the intelligible and the incorporeal to the sensible and the corporeal, the intelligible seeds of the sensible world are manifested for the first time in the tetrad, which proves yet again that it is already considerably far removed from the first cause.

If, as Mr. Anpolat would have it, Hierocles had been influenced by Christians, and if, for this reason, he had wished to make the creator of the world the supreme god, and if he had insisted on illustrating the position of this supreme god by the Pythagorean theory of numbers, which was very widespread in his time, only one solution remained to

[1] Philo, [illegible] pp. 172–174 [illegible] Arnaldez, [illegible] pp. 204–207. Arnaldez, [illegible] The [illegible] the first principle [illegible] the general [illegible] with the [illegible] the solid, [illegible] Isis [illegible] Mazzoni, [illegible] pp. 14–17. [illegible] p. 130, 24–25; Kroll, [illegible] pp. 47, 16–22. [illegible] the tetrad: [illegible] the line to one dyad, [illegible] the tetrad, [illegible] Wilmarth, [illegible] II, 281–282, and the text cited by [illegible] Eusebius, 1844.

him: to identify this god with the monad, or an even higher principle. This is what is done, for instance, by Philo the Jew in Alexandria, for whom God, the creator god of the Old Testament, is sometimes higher than and sometimes identical with the monad, according to the notion of the monad used by his sources.[11] To wish to assimilate the supreme God to a derivative principle like the tetrad would have been nonsense, not only for a Neoplatonist, but also for a Christian or for a Jew. A Christian or a Jew who affirmed that God the Father, the creator of the world, was engendered, would obviously have exposed himself to incurring every kind of anathema.

To be sure, Aujoulat attempts to explain his own interpretation by writing (p. 133): "Clearly, Hierocles here wishes to emphasize the generative properties of the Tetrad (that is, the Demiurge), even if strict logic should suffer therefrom. . . ." Further on, he continues:

> These last two numbers, that is, the Monad and the Septenary, are stated under a negative aspect, and the Tetrad under a positive one. One even ends up considering the fact of being unconsidered as an antecedent of the Monad with regard to the Tetrad, whereas, in good Platonic philosophy, it constitutes a superiority. . . . The Tetrad is fecundity and life; the Monad and the Septenary are immutable in their solid impassibility. How, then, could the Tetrad fail to be the active, creative God, who gives life to all beings, and orders them so as to form the cosmos? . . . It is no small merit to have returned to the sources of authentic Pythagoreanism, giving a breath of life to entire sides of a doctrine that was traditionally quite arid!

Such affirmations are highly questionable. First of all, the Neoplatonists did not refuse to recognize this "breath of life" in the tetrad, since they too saw in it the source of eternal nature. But they obviously considered that this situation of a number both "engendering" and "engendered" did not allow the tetrad to be at the summit of the hierarchy, any more than it did the demiurge. Aujoulat affirms, without any proof, that Hierocles somehow considers the "negative" qualities of the monad and the hebdomad as inferior. Yet Hierocles says absolutely nothing on this subject. In the whole of his text on the tetrad, the monad, and the hebdomad, which I have translated above in its entirety, there is not the slightest remark in the sense intended by Mr. Aujoulat. On the contrary, Hierocles there states that "the characteristic features of the monad

[11] Cf. Festugière, 1944–1954, 4, the chapter on "Philon et les spéculations pythagoriciennes de son temps," pp. 190ff., especially p. 211.

and the hebdomad are the best and the finest, for the monad, as principle of all number, contains within itself the powers of all. . . ." (p. 88, 17–19). What more could he have said to affirm the superiority of the monad over all numbers? His language—completely conventional—is no different in content or in tone from the traditional pagan descriptions of the monad, the tetrad, and the hebdomad, as is proved by the numerous parallel texts I have cited in the notes. Moreover, it would have been unlikely at that time that the "fact of being unengendered" could have been considered "unsatisfactory" in a sense. Being unengendered is, for the pagans, the definition of the first god, and for the Christians the definition of God the Father. In the Christian tradition, it is, as it were, the name of the Father, at least as early as Justin.[7]

Mr. Aujoulat (pp. 121–122) also seems to think that for the ancient Pythagoreans, the tetractys was God himself, and (p. 133) that Hierocles thus returns to the sources of authentic Pythagorean tradition. In fact, however, nothing allows us to suppose that the tetractys was considered identical to God in ancient Pythagoreanism. It is enough to consult W. Burkert's *Weisheit und Wissenschaft*—authoritative insofar as ancient Pythagoreanism is concerned—to see that this is by no means the case: the tetractys does not appear as a personalized power, but as a group of four different elements. "Wie heißt von einigen Gliedern" . .

5. The Demiurge and Providence

From the entire passage from Hierocles that I have translated and commented upon, I thus draw the conclusion that the demiurge-god could not represent, for this philosopher, the supreme principle of his theological system, and that no traces of Christian influence can be discerned in it. We must now determine the position of this demiurge more closely. Happily, Hierocles himself has clarified this point earlier well, so that in his case, unlike that of many other Neoplatonic texts, there is no difficulty in knowing which rank of the various demiurges of the Neoplatonic hierarchy is in question. As Hierocles himself says (p. 87, 17–18; 89, 12), the demiurge in question is "the source of the semi-eternal ordering of the world," who, as an "intelligible god," is "the cause of the celestial and perceptible god"—and not, as Aujoulat writes

[7] Ibid., I, 14, 3–2, 23, 2; 49, 5; 53, 2; 91, 6; 1; 12, 4; 53, 4.

[8] Nicolaus 1992, pp. 638, 1798 (where texts 47 and 48 of the collection are discussed), pp. 1–7; 442.

[9] The tetractys, which is not a god in this context, is not the highest in relation to the ipsissimum Unum, but, as is clear in many texts of the later Neoplatonists, the god that is belonging to this ipsissimum.

[p. 136] following Meunier, "cause of the God who reigns in the heavens and in the sensible world"). He is thus the cause of the world. This description designates, with all desirable precision, the demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus*, at the same time as it emphasizes the fact that he belongs to the hypostasis of the Noûs. This is the same demiurge whose structure was described above by Hierocles as triadic; it is the same demiurge who, in the same context, is designated as the immediate cause of the triadic hypostasis of rational souls, and whom Hierocles identifies further on (p. 135, 11ff.) with the Zeus who is mentioned in the *Cratylus* passage, on which he is commenting. We find the same details—triadic structure of the demiurge as immediate cause of a triadic hypostasis of souls, and its identification with Zeus—in Iamblichus, Proclus, and other Neoplatonists.[illegible] It must be emphasized, however, that in these authors the Zeus in question is far from occupying the most eminent place in the Neoplatonic pantheon, as I have demonstrated above.[illegible] Moreover, the text by Hierocles we are interpreting shows that he is aware of other hypostases prior to the demiurge (triadic, which should be placed in parallel to the monad, the dyad, and the triad). It is highly probable, however, that for Hierocles even the monad is not the supreme principle; the comparison with other Neoplatonists leads us to this conclusion. Calcidius, for instance, who is slightly earlier than Hierocles, but who, unlike Hierocles, is influenced not by Iamblichus but by Porphyry and Numenius, identifies the monad with the first intellect or the demiurge of the *Timaeus*.[illegible] However, other passages of his commentary on the *Timaeus* demonstrate that this intellect does not represent the first principle for him,[illegible] but occupies only the second place in the hierarchical order. Iamblichus also calls the second principle of his theological system "monad", yet, for him, it is no longer identical with the Platonic demiurge,[illegible] but is "principle and god of gods, monad come forth from the One, prior to Essence and principle thereof."

In general, we can say that the idea of conceiving the demiurgic activity, or the process of the world's procession, on the Neopythagorean model of the relation of the tetrad to the decad, seems to be common

[illegible]

[illegible] W. Dorrie, [illegible]

[illegible]

Calcidius, *In Tim.*, cap. [illegible], p. [illegible], 120 Waszink.

[illegible] Cf. Calcidius, *In Tim.*, cap. [illegible], p. 212, 211 Waszink. Sorabji, [illegible] Moreover, [illegible] the monad. But Calcidius [illegible] Mahdi, *Numenius*, [illegible]

Cf. Iamblichus, *De myst.*, VIII, 2, 261, 9–262, 3 [illegible] Places

in the Athenian school. This conception appears very clearly in Proclus. While explaining the text from the *Timaeus* [illegible] in which Plato says that the demiurge sees the forms that are in the Intelligible Living Being, he identifies [illegible] the tetrad with the "Intelligible Living Being," and the decad with the "demiurge." In so doing, he bases himself on the *Hymn to Numbers*, which the Neoplatonists attributed to Pythagoras [illegible]:

> [illegible] the divine number of six progressions] reaches, from the unoriginated to follow [illegible] the Monad, as far as the sacred tetrad [illegible] the tetrad, born of the [illegible] Monad, the all-encompassing, the Ineffable one, the who [illegible] all things, the Indivisible, the Indefatigable one; they call her the pure Decad [illegible]

We can easily understand, first, why Proclus identifies the tetrad with the Intelligible Living Being: it is because Plato [illegible] affirms that there are four forms in the Intelligible Living Being. Moreover, as we have seen above, for Proclus, as for the entire tradition, the decad is superior to the tetrad [illegible]. Thus, he says, [illegible] is why the demiurge possesses a totality superior to the totality proper to the Living Being in itself, although he contains everything the latter contains.

For Proclus, however, the Intelligible Living Being already has a demiurgic activity in a transcendent mode. Here, we can compare the formula Hierocles applies to the tetrad: [illegible] with that of Proclus, *In Tim.*, III, p. 106, 18 Diehl: [illegible]. Likewise, in the *Platonic Theology*, [illegible] speaking of the tetrad that is identical with the Intelligible Living Being and which has, for him, at the same time a monad plus a triad, he affirms: "It (the tetrad) is the very first cause of creation and of demiurgy."

These texts are interesting in that they show that the tetrad is related to demiurgic activity. More precisely, Proclus makes the monad, which is not a number but the source of numbers, correspond to the Father; the tetrad—that is, the Intelligible Living Being—to the Father and Creator; and the decad—that is, the demiurge—to the Creator and Father. The relations between the Intelligible Living Being and the demiurge for Proclus are, moreover, extremely complex, for he points out [illegible] that the Intelligible Living Being is simultaneously prior to the demiurge, in the

[illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.*, III, 317, 3–28 [illegible]
[illegible] Albinus, pp. [illegible] 2–4
[illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.*, I, 432, 21–28 Diehl; [illegible] III, 19, p. 67, 33–[illegible] Saffrey-Westerink
[illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.*, I, 431, 28ff. Diehl

demiurge, and posterior to the demiurge, insofar as the demiurge thinks the Intelligible Living Being.

This Intelligible Living Being and this demiurge are both situated at a relatively low degree in the hierarchy of beings. In Proclus' system, the Intelligible Living Being is located at the level of the third intelligible triad. Before it, therefore, come the One, then the henads, then the first and the second intelligible triad. Between the Intelligible Living Being and the demiurge, five hierarchized levels are inter-slated: the three intelligible and intellectual triads, and the first two degrees of the intellectual hebdomad[1].

It is also on the model of the relations of the tetrad to the decad that Proclus' master Syrianus pictures the relation of the Intelligible Living Being to the demiurge. Basing himself on the same Pythagorean *Theorem to Numbers* that Proclus, as we have just seen, [illegible] cited in this context, Syrianus affirms [illegible] that the forms are in the Intelligible Living Being in an intelligible and tetradic mode, and in a "decadic" and intellectual mode in the demiurgic intellect. We also find in Syrianus the idea that the first cause of the demiurgic is found in the tetrad:

> [illegible] the four principles of the overall demiurgy [illegible] universe where the sum of the decad is produced by the tetractys.[2]

In conformity with the relation that exists between the tetrad and the decad,

> the Model [that is, the Intelligible Living Being] is both above the Demiurgic and within, above him in an intelligible mode, within him in an intellective mode.[3]

As he reports his master's doctrine, Proclus states that

> Plato's very expressions [in the *Timaeus*] seem sometimes to posit the Model as different from the Demiurge, and sometimes as identical to him.[4] And he continues to say that Plato's commentators says they are the same, and sometimes different, and in both cases he is correct.

[1] Ibid., p. 84.
[2] Syrianus, *In Metaph.*, p. 106, 5 (ed. Kroll).
[3] Syrianus, *In Metaph.*, p. 150, 15–151, 2 (Kroll).
[4] Syrianus on Proclus, *In Tim.*, I, p. 423, 2 (ed. Diehl).
[5] Syrianus, on Proclus, *In Tim.*, p. 423, 2 (ed. Diehl); trans. based on that by Festugière, 1966–1968, 2:182.
[6] Proclus, *In Tim.*, I, p. 424, 19 (ed. Diehl); trans. after Festugière, 1966–1968, 2:182.

The teacher of Syrianus and Hierocles had been Plutarch of Athens. Unfortunately, we do not know his conception of the demiurge; yet we do know, in general, that he had undergone the influence of Iamblichus. Now, it is interesting to observe that the hierarchy of the intelligible and of the intellectual world we found in Syrianus and in Proclus was already known, in its broad outlines, to Iamblichus, and that the problem of the relations between the Living Being in itself and the demiurge therefore, as we have seen, of the relations between the tetrad and the decad, was already raised by this philosopher. According to the testimony of Proclus, Iamblichus distinguished three intelligible triads, three intelligible and intellectual triads, and one intellectual triad. For him, however, the Living Being in itself was identified with the three intelligible triads, and the demiurge with the intellectual triad. Therefore, according to Proclus, Iamblichus identified the Living Being in itself with the demiurge, whereas he attributed to the demiurge the third rank among the Fathers in the intellectual triad. We thus encounter here the problematic we have already met with in Proclus and Syrianus: the process of the demiurge begins at the intelligible level and ends at the intellectual level. In a sense, the Living Being in itself and the demiurge are identical, insofar as the demiurge, as intellect that knows the Living Being in itself, is identical with it, and also insofar as the demiurge identifies within himself everything that has been deployed in the intelligible world. The Living Being in itself is the principle that contains within itself intuitively everything that will hence forth be in a state of division. Thus, Iamblichus insisted on the dynamic identity between the Living Being in itself and the demiurge; would, if we take up once again the arithmological correspondences proposed by Syrianus and by Proclus, justify the identification between the tetrad and the demiurge, the Living Being in itself being considered as a tetrad, because of *Timaeus* 31b 4–7. We must therefore suppose a system close to that of Iamblichus, if we wish to understand Hierocles' identification of the tetrad and the demiurge.

After commenting on pages 241–262 of Mr. Aujoulat's book *Le néo-platonisme alexandrin: Hiéroclès d'Alexandrie*, I here add a few remarks concerning his article "Le demiurge chez Hiéroclès d'Alexandrie: En réponse à l'article de Marie Hadot" (R.E.G., 1986, pp. 241–262).[1] These remarks are adapted from my second article of 1993.[2] First, on the subject of Origen the Pagan, whom Mr. Aujoulat supposes, with-

[1] Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 307, 27–28: ἔχοντα τὰς ἰδέας τοῦ νοητοῦ κόσμου "Demiurge".

[2] *R.E.G.*, CVI, 1993, pp. 400–429.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 418–419.

out supplying any proof, is Hierocles' source for his doctrine concerning the first god. On page 413, Mr. Aujoulat says:

> However, the former *Isot.* Plotinus) preaches the transcendence of the One, and the other Isot. Origen the Pagan) does not. We shall conclude that they did not interpret the elucubrations of the Pythagoreans and the Neopythagoreans on the world and the One in the same way. If the supreme god is a creator, like the god of Aristotle, of Origen, and perhaps of Hierocles, the Pythagorean principle cannot longer play a role of transcendental principle, just as the One of Plotinus no longer has a reason to exist. We must then make do with the demiurgos as supreme god and creator.

I am afraid Mr. Aujoulat has not adequately grasped what separates Origen from Plotinus. It is cause of a different interpretation of the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides* — and not as a result of a divergent interpretation of the "elucubrations of the Pythagoreans" — Origen rejected Plotinus' One-Above, which transcends being, as non-existent, but that did not stop him from assimilating his own first cause — that is, absolute being, identified with the demiurge — to another sort *Above* that does not transcend being. This point is in a text from Proclus, which I cite after the translation by Saffrey and Westerink:[*]

> Indeed, he not [sc. Origen] stops at the intellect as the very first being, and he says that the One, which is beyond all intellect and all being, and of which there was neither comprehension nor knowledge, all account, and all intellectual grasp, we would not say that he goes astray either from agreement with Plato or from the nature of things, but it is because the Origens completely thus existent and non-subsistent, that the intellect is what is best, and that primary being, and the primary [illegible] identical [illegible] to [illegible] or not to speaking, so, that we could not agree with him on this point. .

By identifying absolute being, the intellect-demiurge, and the absolute one, Origen was merely taking up once again the position of many Platonists prior to him and, like them, he had recourse to "make do with the demiurgos as supreme god and creator," which, moreover, never occupied the place of the supreme god, even among the Py-

[*] On this subject, cf. H. D. Saffrey and L. G. Westerink, 1974, pp. [illegible], and H. R. Schwyzer, 1951, 52–53.

[**] *Theol. Plat.*, II, 4, 1, 11, p. 51, [illegible] Westerink.

Pythagoreans, as we have seen.[1] I could almost stop with this remark, for Mr. Aujoulat's argument is largely based upon the false hypothesis that Hierocles could not recognize the monad or the *hen* as first ontological entity, because his doctrine was based on that of Origen, and Origen did not accept the existence of the One. Yet I repeat: Origen refused the existence only of a One that transcends beings; yet he did recognize as first cause or first principle an absolute "one," identical with absolute being and with the intellect-demiurge. It, therefore, Hierocles had wanted to follow Origen in his doctrine concerning the demiurge as first principle—which, once again, is a completely gratuitous supposition on the part of Mr. Aujoulat—he should, like Origen, have identified it with the one or the monad, and not with the tetrad. In all of ancient Greek literature, moreover—and the texts on number we have seen are quite numerous—there exists no example of another having the idea, which could only be qualified as absurd, of identifying his *first principle* with the number *four*.

Let us go through a few more objections from page 114 and following of Mr. Aujoulat's article.[2]

The first topic of discussion is the interpretation of the following passage:

> "The power of the decad or the monad is one; the tetrad or the number four, for proof of the decad's perfection, must encompass [illegible], that is, the decad, [illegible] perfection, measured by the monad, is observed in the tetrad."[3]

Despite Mr. Aujoulat's objections, I remain convinced that the [illegible] translated as "a kind of united perfection" is a rapid allusion to the fact that the perfection in question is not the united perfection *par excellence*, which is that of the monad, but a united perfection that derives from the monad. I readily admit that a beginner would not have grasped all the meaning of this detail, but at least the teacher has expressed himself correctly, according to the good pedagogical principle that a simplification should not give rise to a falsification. I cannot here review the expressions *kata diexodon teleiotes* and *hemonikote tes teleiotes* more clear,

[1] Cf. above, p. [illegible]

[2] Aujoulat, pp. [illegible]

[illegible] Mr. Aujoulat's [illegible] the complex problem-solving theorem, which is not Pythagorean, used in the [illegible]

with the help of another text from Hierocles, that I have already cited and interpreted above.[illegible] In his treatise *On providence*, Hierocles tries to explain the differences between the three classes of intelligent souls, all three of which are the work of the demiurge.[illegible]

> Since there are three excellent intellective kinds, the first and highest of the demiurge's productions, which has received unchangeably and unalterably its resemblance to him, is in all godlike good order, as we said of the kind of the heavenly beings. The second kind, which receives the divine order in a secondary, contrasted and degraded way, does not share in the divinity, resemblance, unchangeable and indestructible, but is in strings and unalterably turned towards the external laws which characterize we attributed to the ethereal beings. The third, as the last of the divine kinds, is not only inferior to the excellence of the heavenly beings by the fact that it is somewhat subject to alteration, but because of the fact that it can sometimes be worsened, even turned below the worth of the ethereal beings. For the last of these, enlightening the soul, and of possessing knowledge of him in unified form, except when it turns to the heavenly beings, whereas enlightening both the perceptible curvatures and goods, belongs to essence to the ethereal beings. But the fact of not always intelligizing, and of intelligizing in a partial way in the very act of intelligizing, has been attributed as a proper characteristic to human souls, which by nature had some of the undivided intellections of the heavenly beings and the knowledge plurified in an orderly way of the ethereal beings, since these souls do not intelligize order in a unified way, coming to perpetually[illegible]

To think of the demiurge in a unitive or unified way — Hierocles uses the adverbs *koinomeros* and *henapos* indifferently — means that the heavenly souls have a total, intuitive vision of him, without distinction of the various forms or Ideas that are in him in an intelligible mode, whereas the ethereal souls think of him *diexodikos*, that is, passing from one form or Idea to another, and introducing distinction into their mode of thinking. This text testifies to the fact that for Hierocles as for all Platonists, from the beginning of Platonism to its end, that which is more or less unified, and thereby rendered more or less similar to the first principle, has a higher ontological rank than that which is more detailed. The perfection of the detail is therefore situated at an ontological level lower than that of the retrad. We encounter the same ontological subordination of what exists in a detailed or differentiated

[illegible] Mosse, p. 41.
[illegible] Hierocles in Photius, *Library*, cod. 251, 460b37 Bekker, vol. VII, p. 19 Henry.

way to what exists in a still undifferentiated mode in a text by Nicomachus of Gerasa.[illegible] We find it again in Syrianus,[illegible] Hierocles' contemporary and, like him, a disciple of Plutarch of Athens, who defends the doctrine of the ancients against Aristotle: "the decad contains within itself the whole of number, no longer in a hidden way, like the monad, nor essentially, like the tetrad, but already with a great deal of alterity and division."

Yet let us see what Mr. Augouard has to say:

> [T]he perfection of the decad is "detailed" (*kata diexodikon*), that is, the decad makes number, much more than the tetrad, which was that of the tetrad is "geometric," because it proceeds by synthesis. In the decad, division of the first four numbers (if we take the text as it is, without supposing a gloss) that the monad is a higher principle as Hierocles, we can understand that the tetrad presents a "versatile unity" with regard to the decad.

First of all, I cannot understand what is meant, in Mr. Augouard's text, by "the decad makes numbers [illegible]." For me, Hierocles' text means that the decad is in a detailed way what the tetrad is in a united way, in other words, that all the forms intelligible numbers included within the demiurgic tetrad in a more or less transcendent state where they remain relatively indistinct from each other, exist in the decad in a detailed way. Next, if we take the text "as it is," we find no trace in Hierocles' text that signifies that the tetrad "proceeds by synthesis." It is not the tetrad, or the number four, that proceeds to the addition of the monad, the dyad, the triad, and itself. Hierocles simply states that by addition, or by placing together, "the numbers from the monad to the tetrad, their sum total gives the decad," and this, it seems to me, means that for the ontological or even purely numerical construction of the decad, the monad, the dyad and the triad are just as indispensable as the tetrad itself. Hierocles is not saying anything different, for in-

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

The degree of their transcendence and of their independence depends on the [illegible] level at which Hierocles has placed the demiurge.

stance, than Nicomachus of Gerasa in his *Theologumena*, extracts or paraphrases of which are found in an anonymous treatise attributed to Iamblichus:[22]

> In the natural increase as far as the tetrad, and the number ten, the things in the world appear as composed together, universally and particularly, as well as the things that are numbered in them, in all the natures. In particular, what contributes especially, and in an extraordinary way, to the harmonious union of the tetrad and ten is the fact that the decad, the number ten, is composed in the same way by a half of the tetrad, and by the numbers that come just before it (and 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10); for, since in fact the decad is common and a universal point (and of the entire decadic system, but also the fact that it peak, the decad) is the limit of corporeal and three-dimensional extension.

Moreover, in the text "as it is" I cannot find anything to justify Mr. Augoulat's affirmation that "the tetrad-terracyes is . . . an equilateral triangle formed by 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 points, which formed a total of 10 points." That figure is compatible only with a terracyes, which would not be the number four, "as it is" for Hierocles, but the assemblage of the first four numbers. On the contrary, the geometrical figure corresponding to the tetrad is, as Hierocles himself says a bit further on (p. 89, 5 Kohlen), the pyramid, made up of four points.

What is truly unexpected is that Mr. Augoulat affirms concerning this alleged figure of the tetrad, for which Hierocles' text does not offer the slightest support, that it gives an explanation of what the *dynamis* of the tetrad is:

> which at least is the merit of continuing itself in Hierocles' text, and not to appeal to an opposition between *dynamis* and *entelecheia*, through the intermediary of Philoponus or Iamblichus, in fact, the Alexandrian does not use this last term. As far as the *dynamis* emergent complex is concerned, it too appears to be absent from the Commentary on the Golden Verses.[23]

As is methodologically sound, I had indeed sought, with regard to the phrase "But the power of the decad is the tetrad," to explain the tech-

[22] Iamblichus, *Theol. arithm.*, p. 20, 1 de Falco.
[23] p. 415.
[24] Cf. my demonstration above, p. 67.
[25] M. Augoulat's article, p. 415.

nical term *dunamis* in Hierocles' text with the help of strictly parallel passages using the same term.[6] Among other texts, I had thus cited Philo, *De opificio mundi*, 104: "For what the decad is in act (*entelekeia*), the tetrad is, it seems, potentially."[7] Needless to say, I maintain my interpretation of the *dunamis* of the tetrad. I merely add that the opposition δύναμις—ἐνέργεια is already found in the *Arithmetica, sive introductio* by Nicomachus of Gerasa.[8]

At page 41 of his article, with regard to the phrase "And the tetrad is the arithmetical mean between the monad and the hebdomad, for in a way it surpasses [the monad] by the same number by which it is surpassed [by the hebdomad]," Mr. Aujoulat criticizes my way of translating πως by "somehow," which is nevertheless completely habitual and without artifice. I admit that πως here may well have the same meaning as ποτε τινι, but this changes strictly nothing. One must really wish to force the text because of a preconceived idea to claim, as does Mr. Aujoulat, that one can be retranslate πως by "in a determinate way," which would give: "for it [the tetrad] surpasses [the monad] in a determinate way by the same number by which it is surpassed." Hierocles would then have rendered himself guilty of a tautology, for "in a determinate way" expresses the same thing as "by the same number," only slightly less precisely. Perhaps it was because he sensed this that Mr. Aujoulat finally translates πως by "precisely," which is not the same thing as "in a determinate way." This translation is certainly "amazing, bear! In addition, whether Mr. Aujoulat translates πως by "in a determinate way" or by "precisely," πως still modifies "surpasses" (*ὑπερτείνει*), an interpretation which he sharply criticized with regard to my own translation at the beginning of the paragraph. In accordance with his own ideas, he should have translated "by the same, in a determinate way, number."

Then comes another highly revealing remark: "We must," says Mr. Aujoulat,[9] "note in passing how carefully the text on the tetrad is composed, and not forget that Hierocles is more of a 'literateur' than a mathematic scholar." The affirmation that Hierocles is more of a literateur than a scholar is a judgment that comes out of thin air, and which Mr. Aujoulat does not even try to back up. The fact that it is stated in a peremptory tone does not make it any more true; yet Mr. Aujoulat uses it to treat Hierocles' text as he pleases. When he thinks it suits him, he recommends that the text be taken "as it is," but if the text "as it is" embarrasses him, he declares that it must not be taken literally, because

[6] J. Hadot, 1990, pp. 23 ff.

[7] L. XXI, 5 Hoch. [illegible] Iamblichus of the *Theologumena arithmetica*, L. Ste., p. [illegible] Delatte, and also n. 27, second quotation.

[8] At p. 51 of his article.

Hierocles is a littérateur and likes literary effects, so that when, even in a passage that appears scientific, like our text on number mysticism, Hierocles uses current Platonist technical terms, he inserts into them a whole other meaning without any warning. Indeed, this is a very convenient presupposition, because it allows the dismissal of all embarrassing parallel texts, not only by previous and contemporary Platonist and Neoplatonist authors, but also by Hierocles himself, because he allegedly writes sometimes as a philosopher and sometimes as a man of letters, and it is obviously Mr. Aujoulat alone who decides, on the basis of mysterious criteria known to him alone, which passages are scientific and which literary. The most serious point, however, is that he not only lowers Hierocles to the rank of a rhetor or a sophist, but that he even presents him as stupid: indeed, Hierocles is, it is alleged, incapable of realizing that if he uses the technical vocabulary or technical schemes current not only in surrounding Neoplatonism, but also throughout the many-centuries-old tradition of number mysticism, he will not be understood by anybody, since he gives these terms another meaning without pointing this out, at least by a word. If Hierocles had desired that, in the typical scheme of number mysticism he reproduces, one should, contrary to tradition, see the ontologically superior principle no longer in the monad, but in the tetrad, it would have been urgently necessary to explain this, for no one except Mr. Aujoulat could have guessed it. He should have said explicitly that for him, the fact that the tetrad is engendered predisposes it to be the first principle. In order to do this, he would have had to attempt the impossible, for one does

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This is, moreover, what he has already done [illegible] Iamblichus, Syrianus, and Macrobius, [illegible] Plotinus.

[illegible] Mr. Aujoulat writes: [illegible] even in a passage which appears scientific [illegible] Hierocles' work a single passage [illegible] Neoplatonism [illegible] surrounding Neoplatonism [illegible] Iamblichus and Proclus. [illegible] 1985, pp. 112–118.

not have to be a philosopher, but merely possess common sense, to know that what is engendered is posterior to that which has engendered it. Nevertheless, Mr. Aujoulat believes Hierocles is capable of having thought the contrary.

Next[illegible] concerning the phrase "for the monad, as principle of all number, contains within itself the powers of all, whereas the hebdomad, as motherless and virginal, has the ratio of the monad in a secondary [sc. derivative] way [illegible]." Mr. Aujoulat criticizes my way of translating *deutera* by "in a secondary way." Thus, I refer to my quotation from Hierocles on page 89, where *deutera* has exactly the same meaning. That this adverb cannot, as Mr. Aujoulat would have it, signify that the hebdomad possesses the merit of the monad on an equal basis and not in one of inferiority, is made obvious by the context. Hierocles describes the hebdomad as being virginal and motherless, a description that evokes the myth according to which Athena burst forth from the head of Zeus without having been engendered by a mother. The hebdomad is, moreover, often identified with Athena in texts concerning number mysticism.[illegible] The hebdomad thus does have a "father"—the monad—but not in the sense that it is engendered by it in the proper sense of the term. A text[illegible] from the *Theologumena arithmetica*, a summarizing the *Arithmetical Introduction* of Nicomachus of Gerasa, shows that the monad does not produce any other number, although it is the cause of them all. In this context, the attribute "unengendered" means that a number is constituted by multiplication, like the numbers four (two times two), six (two times three), eight (two times four), nine (three times three), and ten (two times five). Thus, the hebdomad does indeed have a cause, and this is what distinguishes it from the monad, but it was not engendered, as is the case for Athena, who was not engendered by the seed of her father Zeus, but issued forth from his head.[illegible] Yet what brings the hebdomad even closer to the monad is the fact that it is not only unengendered (although it is caused), but neither does it engender what is constituted by multiplication, unlike the number within the decad, which is not the case for any other number within the decad, except for the monad, which does not engender either. Nevertheless, since the hebdomad is caused—for it has a father, the monad—it is necessarily inferior to the monad, which is unengendered in the proper sense, and it therefore possesses the merit of the monad in a secondary way. Nicomachus of Gerasa makes the hebdomad the providence (*pronoia*) of the

P. 42 [illegible] Mr. Aujoulat's [illegible]

[illegible] the hebdomad [illegible]

[illegible] Iamblichus, [illegible] 1, 1, [illegible]

[illegible] the decad, the monad, [illegible] unengendered rather.

demiurgic god; Proclus compares it to the soul, best of the demiurge's works. By reserving a privileged place within the decad for the hebdomad, Philo thus maintains the spirit of texts on number mysticism, but he never elevates it to the position of first god, contrary to what Mr. Aujoulat believes.[1]

The privilege of the tetrad, by contrast, consists in the fact that it is the only number within the decad that is both engendered (two times two = four) and engendering (two times four = eight), and it, as Hierocles says, contains within itself both the powers of the engendered numbers and those of the engendering numbers; it nevertheless does not unite within itself the powers of either the monad or the hebdomad, which are neither engendered nor engendering. Only the monad contains within it the powers of all the numbers. If we take the text "as it is," we thus see once again that the tetrad cannot have a higher ontological rank than the monad.

That the demiurgic tetrad is not the supreme god in Hierocles' ontology is a hypothesis, therefore not a gratuitous hypothesis, which one is free to accept or to reject — unless one wishes to deny what is obvious —, but it is a fact — as is proved by the text from Hierocles that we have studied — and this fact ruins Mr. Aujoulat's basic hypothesis, from which all the details of his book derive.

We thus observe that Hierocles, with regard to his doctrine of the demiurge and the latter's position within the development of Neoplatonic philosophy, is situated somewhere between Iamblichus and Proclus. We have also noted the fact that this doctrine, as well as that of the soul, presupposes a system already richly diversified with regard to its hierarchy of ontological levels, which must have resembled that of Iamblichus. Yet why, this being the case, did Hierocles mention the ontological levels above the demiurge so briefly, and by way of allusions?

To this question, I shall make the following very brief reply: of the

[1] Aujoulat (Aujoulat, [illegible]), p. [illegible], 2[illegible].

[illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.* II, p. 2[illegible], [illegible] "[illegible] demiurge intelligence is monad, and it is [illegible] the demiurge, [illegible] is [illegible] and hebdomad [illegible] for the hebdomad, [illegible] the [illegible]."

[illegible] 421–424 [illegible] the text from Philo reproduced by Mr. Aujoulat, [illegible] parallel text of Iamblichus [illegible] (1923), p. 101. [illegible] Book [illegible] theorems. [illegible] the elements, in the quadratures to Hierocles, [illegible] and is [illegible] Mr. [illegible] "[illegible] of which the monad [illegible] the hebdomad [illegible] the [illegible] Aujoulat, [illegible] identified with the transcendent One.

seven books on Hierocles' *On Providence*. Photius has preserved only extracts, the totality of which does not exceed twenty pages in the Bude edition. The fact that Photius, in his extracts, does not mention any principle ontologically superior to the demiurge, does not at all prove that Hierocles himself had not spoken of one. On the other hand, as far as his commentary on the *Carmen aureum* is concerned, Hierocles had two reasons not to speak of his theological system in it in a detailed way. In the first place, the highest-placed god in the *Carmen aureum* is Zeus, in his role as leader of the gods of the cult, and that Zeus was never located above the hypostasis of the intellect by any of the contemporary Neoplatonic systems. Interpreting the *Carmen aureum*, Hierocles therefore did not feel inclined to speak of a higher ontological entity. Yet I see the main reason in the fact that the commentary on the *Carmen aureum* was addressed to beginners in philosophy, — since the *Carmen aureum* itself was, according to Hierocles, only a summary of basic Pythagorean dogmas — [illegible] and an elementary pedagogical course [illegible] — and it would have been out of place, from a pedagogical point of view, to confront them with all the details of a complex Neoplatonic system. This fact has also been pointed out by Neil Lewis[illegible] in the preface to his Arabic commentary on the *Golden Verses* attributed to Proclus: "The impression given throughout the commentary of Hierocles is that it was composed specifically as a tool for beginners, using the Pythagorean poem as a text upon which to base a preparatory ethical treatise and avoiding questions of Theology and of Philosophy." At the end of his commentary, [illegible] Hierocles speaks of the methodological restrictions he had thought necessary to impose upon himself:

> Such has been our exegesis of the *Golden Verses*. It contains a summary, modest sketch of the teachings of the Pythagoreans. Indeed, it did not seem fitting to us to elaborate more explanations of the brevity of the *Golden Verses* themselves, for in this way many things which had been excellently presented would have remained obscure; nor to extend them to the full amplitude of the whole of philosophy — this would have been too great a task for the present discourse. Instead, we opted for a moderate amplitude in our explanations, so that, such that it might be apt to elucidate the meaning of the Verses, and, with regard to their interpretation, to develop

[illegible] Hierocles and Simplicius [illegible], pp. [illegible], reprinted in [illegible], pp. [illegible]

[illegible] Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum* XXVII, 11, p. 122, [illegible]

N. Lewis [illegible], p. [illegible]

[illegible] Hierocles, *In Carmen aureum* XXVII, 10–11, p. 121, 19–122, 4 Kohler

the general dogmas—[illegible]—only that which is suitable to an exegesis of these verses. For the poem is nothing other than a perfect sketch of philosophy and an epitome of its basic dogmas, and an elementary pedagogical course written by those who have already started out upon the divine path, for those who come after them. . . .

CHAPTER IX

Hierocles' Philosophical Ideas on Providence

Let us now consider Hierocles' doctrine on providence. Here again, after noticing a number of analogies between this theory and that professed by Simplicius in his commentary on the *Manual*, Praechter[1] wished to recognize doctrinal characteristics proper to the school of Alexandria, which he thought were due to Christian influence. In the first place, he thought Hierocles takes up a position proper to Middle Platonism, according to which *Heimarmene* consists only in the fact that our actions, which are freely chosen, necessarily have quite determinate consequences.[2] However, he thought, Hierocles replaces the necessity (*anagkē*) of these consequences, which was repugnant to the Christians,[3] by the constant and educative action of the divinity, who recompenses our good and bad actions by their consequences, with a view to our moral progress. If this is accepted, divine justice, which sometimes seems debatable, would be justified, if we consider more generally that it recompenses actions committed in a previous life. According to Praechter, then, Hierocles—in opposition, one is to understand, to the Neoplatonists of the school of Athens—replaces Plotinus' *Anankē* by the idea of a constant education willed by God. But this is completely false. Quite to the contrary, it is precisely this idea of a divine education that we find in Proclus and in the Neoplatonists who came after him. There was, moreover, no substitution: *Anankē* was at least a kind of *Anankē*,[4] is identical to *Heimarmene*,[5] which is ne-

[1] Praechter, "Hierokles," col. 1442.

[2] Praechter cites Alinous (= Albinus), *Didaskalikos*, 26, 179, 19, p. 51 Wachsmuth as an example.

[3] According to Nemesius, *De natura hominis*, 38, 106, p. 119 Morani.

[4] See the text in Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, book II, 7, 2nd, 27 Nauck; Proclus, *Commentary on the Timaeus*, vol. III, p. 278, 14 Diehl.

[5] Cf. Proclus, *Commentary on the Timaeus*, vol. III, p. 278, 14 Diehl: "Moreover, according to Plato, in addition to opposite dispositions [illegible] necessary consequences [illegible] Syrianus, Proclus and Ammonius [illegible] appellation."

sult of the influence of events on man, is interpreted as a means of education. I can only explain Praechter's mistake by the fact that he did not take into consideration Proclus' *Tria opuscula*, which, in his day, were known only in the Latin translation by Moerbeke. If he had studied these three little works attentively, two of which deal especially with questions related to providence, and the third of which deals with the origin of evil, he would have been able to note that everything he thought was a particularity of Hierocles' doctrine on providence is found equally in Proclus. Let us add that, in the tome of the *Tria opuscula*, he would have found a general interpretative problem analogous to the one set forth for us by those of Hierocles' works that have come down to us. In these books, for instance in the second treatise, entitled *On Providence*, Proclus uses extremely simple philosophical language. Instead of displaying before the treatise's addressee, the mathematician Theodorus, the entire complicated hierarchy of the multiple hypostases of his system, Proclus keeps to what is essential, and mentions only the three principal hypostases: the Good or the One, the Noûs, and the souls, most often speaking only of God, without distinguishing between the first two hypostases. Upon seeing this, Praechter would perhaps have been more prudent in his judgment on Hierocles' philosophical system. It is true that this simple pedagogical precaution, which Proclus takes with regard to an audience without philosophical training, has been interpreted in a peculiar way by certain scholars. Such simplicity of language can, it is maintained, be explained by the fact that the *Tria opuscula* were written by Proclus in his youth, when he was close to the philosophy of Plutarchus. But this hypothesis was refuted by H. Boese.[*] We are thus in the presence of a case analogous to that of Hierocles: an author's silence on the subject of the complex hierarchy of hypostases does not imply the absence or the ignorance of this hierarchy in the author's thought. We may also note that D. Amand,[**] in his book on *Fatalism and Freedom in Greek Antiquity*, makes no mention of these three treatises by Proclus, however inexcusable this may seem, since two of them concern the subject of his book directly. It is thus not surprising that the author should end up with completely false conclusions concerning Hierocles and Proclus.

The continuation of our investigations will lead us to a wholly other judgment than Praechter. We shall see that the Neoplatonic doctrine on providence was already fixed, in its broad outlines, at the beginning of Neoplatonism; that it owed a great deal to Middle Platonism; and that,

[*] Boese, 1960, pp. xxxv.
[**] D. Amand, 1945.

as a whole, it underwent a development analogous to the overall ontology of Neoplatonism. We shall also see that the place that Hierocles occupies within the evolution of the Neoplatonic doctrine on providence corresponds to that which he occupies within the overall evolution of Neoplatonism; that is, he is situated between Iamblichus and Proclus.

I therefore give the continuation of the text by Photius cited above,[17] and start by recalling the last phrase partially commented upon:

> [But the god who is their creator and father reigns as king over them all, and his paternal royalty [illegible] providence [illegible] which distributes to each kind what is suitable to it, and the justice-deity that follows upon it is called *Heimarmene* [illegible]. For this is not the thoughtless necessity [illegible] of the astrologers of horoscopes, nor the constraint [illegible] of the Stoics, as Alexander of Aphrodisias thinks, confusing [illegible] with the Platonic doctrine of fate, but it is that [illegible], which is shared by incantations and sacrifices, as some think, but it is God's [illegible] dealing [illegible] concerning those things that are in accordance with the decree of providence, and corrects the things that are [illegible] order and sequence [illegible], with regard to the truth, chosen by people [illegible] our voluntary acts.

I. The Heimarmene of Providence

The preceding text from Hierocles thus distinguishes *Heimarmene* from providence, and gives a definition of these two entities, that enables us to see the subordination of *Heimarmene* to providence. First of all, let us consider this definition of providence, as well as its historical background, more closely. We note that Hierocles defines providence as "that which attributes to each kind what is suitable to it." Such a definition is found

[illegible]

in Proclus.[illegible] Besides such definitions, the Neoplatonists liked to give an etymological definition of the word [illegible]. Thus, according to Plotinus,[illegible] providence is intelligence prior to all things ([illegible]), whereas for Proclus and the Neoplatonists who came after him, providence is in the strict sense an activity prior to the intellect: [illegible].[illegible] In the texts from Hierocles that have been preserved, we find no trace of etymological definitions. However, if we adopt the reading [illegible] of the anonymous eleventh-century corrector, which, joined to [illegible], means "royalty which derives its name from the father," we could consider this formula as proof of the fact that Hierocles makes [illegible] derive from the demiurge-Nous, and this would seem, at first glance, to indicate that he was closer to Plotinus' definition.[illegible] Clearly, the position occupied by providence within the divine hierarchy changes according to the etymological doctrine one adopts: the first one identifies it with the Nous, while the second gives providence a rank higher than the Nous. In any case, Hierocles' affirmation that the royalty of the demiurge is providence is also reconcilable with the second etymological interpretation, as is shown by the following text from Proclus:[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

> [I]f the Demiurge is Intellect, and at the same time Providence, in so far as within it there is something superior even to the Intellect, it is precisely that it has received the name of 'Providence' because of the activity which transcends the Intellect.

2. The Definition of the Law of Heimarmenê

Let us now move on to the examination of the definition of *Heimarmenê* and its doctrinal background. The continuation of our text first describes *Heimarmenê* as the justice (*dikê*) that accompanies providence, and as god's justice dealing with men. Clearly, Hierocles is inspired here by the image of *Dikê* accompanying Zeus the demiurge-providence. This image is taken from Plato's *Laws*, where it is said that

> *Dikê*, who always accompanies Zeus, punishes all breaches of the divine law.

This Platonic passage is itself probably the reflection of an Orphic myth, for it does seem that the old story (*palaios logos*) to which Plato refers in this context is an Orphic text. Be that as it may, for the Neoplatonists the identity between Plato's *Dikê* and that of the Orphic myths was a fact. Thus, in his commentary on the *Timaeus*, Proclus connects the text from the *Laws* with fragment 158 of the *Orphica*:

> There followed him Dikê, who punishes severely.

Hierocles himself is probably alluding to an Orphic text when he says that *Dikê* keeps watch over human affairs. P. Boyancé compares

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Proclus, *In Tim.* I, p. 415, 20ff. Diehl (trans. Festugière, 1966–1968, 2, p. 291). [illegible]

Plato, *Laws*, IV, 716 A2. [illegible]

[illegible]

Proclus, *In Tim.* [illegible]

[illegible]

P. Boyancé, 1967, pp. 177–178.

Orphic Hymn no. 62, addressed to *Dike*, with texts from Philo and Plato; the role of *Dike* as an avenger (τιμωρός) appears both in the Orphic hymn and in Philo and Plato, as well, I might add, as in Proclus, Damascius, and Simplicius. In our context, we must pay particular attention to a text from Philo, cited by Boyancé, in which the author relieves God of all punitive activity. He is the cause only of good things, and does not produce anything evil; and it is *Dike* who must take upon herself the responsibility for punitive actions. Here we see the appearance of a distinction analogous to the one Hierocles establishes between the providence that essentially distributes and preserves goods and *Heimarmene-Dike*, which corrects the faults committed. In the same article, as well as in another entitled "Xénocrate et les Orphiques," Boyancé emphasizes the importance for Neoplatonic exegesis of the figure of *Dike* of a second text from the *Laws*. Here Plato starts from a verse by Homer: "This is the *Dike* of the gods who hold Olympus" (*Odyssey*, XIX, 43).

The Neoplatonists used the two texts from the *Laws* that mention *Dike*, comparing them with the speech by the demiurge to the recent gods in the *Timaeus*, in order to associate *Dike* with the recent or encosmic gods. What is more, the functions of *Dike*, as Plato describes them in

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P. Boyancé, 1962, p. [illegible]

Proclus, *In Remp.*, vol. II, p. [illegible]

[illegible]

Philo, [illegible] "He (i.e. God) [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] *Heimarmene* [illegible]

P. Boyancé, 1948.

Plato, *Laws* X, 904e4.

Plato, *Tim.* 41c.

Proclus, *In Tim.*, vol. III, p. [illegible] "Plato [illegible] right [illegible] with the encosmic gods [illegible] the companion of *Zeus* [illegible] Orpheus [illegible] fr. 158 [illegible] Plato followed him [illegible] *Dike*, who [illegible] Athenian Stranger (*Laws* IV, 716a2) [illegible] he is accompanied by *Dike*, who is [illegible] with the encosmic gods, and who directs

these two texts from the *Laws* are absolutely identical to those Hierocles attributes to *Heimarmenē* at the time of the reincarnations of human souls. *Dikē* assigns to each soul, in accordance with what it has deserved in its previous life, a determinate place in the various regions of the cosmos, and during each individual life, she keeps watch over the conduct of each person. The text from Hierocles we are now commenting seems, moreover, to be an interpretation of the second text from Plato's *Laws*, for the demiurge appears in Plato in the image of a king (904a6). In addition, the text suggests the identification of *Dikē* and *Heimarmenē*. Here Plato describes (904c6ff.) the rewards and punishments human souls undergo, as a function of their moral attitudes, in accordance with the law and the order of *Heimarmenē*, by the Homeric verse:

> this is the *Dikē* of the gods who hold Olympus

Thus, Hierocles follows Plato by failing to make any apparent distinction between *Dikē* and *Heimarmenē*. Can we conclude from this

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the universe together with them, according to their rank. [illegible] Cf. also Proclus, *In Remp.*, vol. II, p. 144, [illegible] Kroll [illegible] *Dikē* [illegible] Damascius, *In Phaed.*, p. 179, [illegible]

[illegible] Cf. also Proclus, *In Remp.*, vol. II, p. 144, [illegible] Kroll, cited in the preceding note.

that he saw no difference between these two entities from the point of view of their essence? Nothing could be less certain, as is shown by the example of the late Neoplatonists. In Proclus's work, the functions of *Dike* and of *Themis* appear to be strictly parallel—both of them embrace all the cosmic laws—but there is nevertheless a difference in essence between the two. For Proclus, whereas *Dike* is an encosmic goddess, who is consequently situated within the class of rational souls, *Themis* is assimilated to the Nature of the All, which, although it is "a nature imbued with the divine," rather than merely plain Nature, corresponds to a lower ontological echelon than the hypostasis of rational souls. This hierarchization of *Dike* and of *Themis* may perhaps correspond to a tendency to reconcile all the disparate elements which, over time, made their entrance into Platonism; this, it may not yet have been carried out by the Neoplatonists on Hierocles' time. As in the

[illegible]

case of providence, the Hieroclean formulation we are interpreting does not furnish any information on the essence of the entities in question, nor does it necessarily mean that Hierocles really considered *Dikē* and *Heimarmenē* to be identical. We have already alluded several times to the extraordinary fluidity of vocabulary which their system allows the Neoplatonists. Since each ontological level is illuminated by the one superior to it, so that each hypostasis contains within itself, in the form of an image and in a weakened way, the functions of the one before it, it would be completely legitimate for a Neoplatonist occasionally to confuse *Dikē* and *Heimarmenē*, or to designate them by a single term, even if they are not situated on the same ontological level.

Through the internal logic of the Neoplatonic system, the notion of *Heimarmenē* underwent an evolution that was the converse of that of the notion of providence. Providence was placed ever higher in the ontological hierarchy, and *Heimarmenē* ever lower. To illustrate this development, we offer a brief account of a few elements going back to old Platonism. We know that Iamblichus identified *Heimarmenē* and nature, and, since he clearly considered nature as the inseparable organizing principle of the *cosmos*, which for him was probably situated on the level of the vegetative soul, we cannot doubt that, for him, too, *Heimarmenē* did not belong to the same ontological level as the rational souls. In Calcidius, Pseudo-Plutarch, and Nemesius we encounter a doctrine that identifies the essence of *Heimarmenē* with the World Soul. If the distinction between the three classes of different essences

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Compare Iamblichus, *Letter to Macedonius On Fate*, in Stobaeus, [illegible] II, 8, 43, p. 173, [illegible] Wachsmuth: [illegible] things [illegible], and [illegible] to the [illegible] *Heimarmenē* [illegible] of nature [illegible] Iamblichus, [illegible] p. [illegible] Wachsmuth: [illegible] of the world, which [illegible] [illegible] Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* [illegible]

Calcidius, *In Timaeum* [illegible] 143, p. 182 [illegible] Waszink: [illegible] Platonem duplici [illegible] in a substantial [illegible] is considered as [illegible], and the third, which is [illegible]" Cf. also Nemesius, *De natura hominis*, [illegible] p. [illegible] Morani: [illegible]

rational souls, irrational souls, and vegetative souls was already known at this time, such an identification would mean that *Hermeias* was considered as being on the level of the rational souls. Otherwise, *Hermeias* would simply be the soul, which includes within the same essence different aspects of rational soul, irrational soul, and of nature or vegetative soul. We know, for instance, that Atticus and Alcinous did not yet recognize these differentiations. For Atticus, the World Soul and nature are one and the same, and he reproached Aristotle with having introduced a useless distinction between soul and nature [illegible] A text like Plato, *Laws*, 896 a 2, which carries out a concrete assimilation between nature and soul, may have been at the base of such a conception. Alcinous, for his part, sees in nature one of the two aspects of the World Soul, the other one being its intelligence. [illegible] It is approximately this state of Platonic doctrine that is reflected by the *Chaldaean Oracles*, as was shown by Hans Lewy. [illegible] In these, their personification of the World Soul, they attributed the following three functions: as *Psyche*, she animates all of creation; as *Physis* or *Anankē*, she keeps watch over the stars' regular movement; as *Hermaiesia*, she reigns over men, through the intermediary of her demons. Thus, we find the equation World Soul = nature = *Hermaiesia*.

As far as *Dikē* is concerned, taken either in its essence or in its relation with *Hermaiesia*, I do not know of any text, for the period going from Atticus-Alcinous to Iamblichus, that alludes to it. Yet it is interesting to note, with regard to the first generation of Platonists, that a fragment of Xenocrates attests the identification of the Soul of the All with *Dikē*: here, *Dikē*, as the Soul of the All, is opposed to *Zeus*, who reigns over the sky, whereas she reigns over the lower part of the world. [illegible]

question, especially with regard to the three Parcae, [illegible] based on *Timaeus*, 39 b 2, [illegible] Antiochus of Ascalon, [illegible] 18 Back [illegible] Lachesis [illegible] the earth, the sea, the sky of the world, and [illegible] Clotho [illegible] Earth, and is a sort of "psychic" [illegible] governing especially the [illegible] rational, individuals [illegible] happy [illegible] thanks to [illegible] ordered [illegible]

[illegible] Xenocrates, [illegible] 12, 1, 4, p. 55, 79.

Alcinous, *Didaskalikos*, [illegible] 4, p. 23 Whittaker.

H. Cherniss, [illegible] pp. 555–558.

[illegible] Xenocrates, [illegible] 1, 1, 28, p. 56, apud Wachsmuth, [illegible] "Xenocrates the Chalcedonian, [illegible] are gods, the first being of mortal [illegible] in the heavens [illegible] but this second, being [illegible] the rank of mother of the gods, he calls *Dikē*, she governs the part beneath the heavens, and for him she is the Soul of the world."

3. Some Negative Definitions of the Essence of "Heimarmene"

All the definitions of *Heimarmene* we find in Proclus, as well as those we encounter in the commentaries on the *Carmen aureum*, refer exclusively to its functions, and they seek to specify the limits of the power it exerts over human beings. Nevertheless, we may find some indications on the essence of *Heimarmene* in the series of negations that text contains, which define what it is not: It is neither the constraint of the Stoics, nor nature as defined by Alexander of Aphrodisias. What Hierocles implies by protesting in this way against Alexander's definition becomes more clear by means of a parallel text from Proclus:

> [W]e say that we must not define *Heimarmene* as the particular natural disposition (*tên idiotikên hexin*), as some Peripatetics, like Alexander, will have it, for such a natural disposition is without strength and not eternal; whereas, in accordance with the common notions, we assume that the power of *Heimarmene* is something powerful and bind[ing] as the order of the cosmos (*kosmikên*) [...] [f]or the cause of order is one thing, and order is something altogether different [...].

In his treatise *De fato*, Alexander "identified in principle fatality and nature—*to kyriôtatên* = *oikeiôsi*". Yet this definition needed to be made more precise; that which happens "in conformity with nature" does not happen "necessarily" (*ex anagkês*), for within what habitually occurs in conformity with nature we may encounter products that are "contrary to nature" (*tôn physei*). Such products would thus also be "contrary to fatality" (*tês eimarmenês*). It must therefore be specified that the nature that is identical with fatality is each individual's own nature (*oikeiôsei*): the cause of what happens most often is natural constitutions and dispositions as a consequence of their actions and of their modes of life, or the cause of what happens fatally in the development of individual life. Proclus translates this into Platonic language: *physei oikeiôsei*, the nature peculiar to each one, and Hierocles identifies his nature with the "Platonic nature of bodies." For Hierocles, there could be no question of allowing this assimilation of fatality to individual nature, probably for the same reasons as Proclus: individual nature is too weak, and it is not eternal.

Proclus, *In Tim.*, III, p. 2[illegible]. Sc. Diehl, trans. based on that of Festugière, 1966, [illegible], 145.

Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De fato*, 6, 168, 28–[illegible], [illegible], p. 91 Thillet. The texts have been collected by Festugière, 1966, 1968, 2: 145, n. 2.

Next, for Hierocles, is *Heimarmenē* the so-called constraint of the Stoics.[ ] In Calcidius, we find a rather well-developed refutation [ ] of the Stoic thesis from a Platonic point of view. It may be supposed that this kind of argumentation still remained more or less the same in the Neoplatonists of the fifth and sixth centuries. Calcidius proceeds as follows: first, according to Plato, providence and *Heimarmenē* are not, as Chrysippus would have it, two names that denote the same reality, namely, the divine will. Instead, *Heimarmenē* is subordinate to providence. Second, Plato does not admit that all events are fixed in advance by providence and *Heimarmenē*. According to Plato, there are things that pertain to providence alone, others that result from *Heimarmenē*, others that depend on our free will or on chance (fortuna = τύχη), and still others that occur spontaneously (casu = αὐτοματόν).[ ] What must be explained, therefore, is first of all the mutual implication of providence and *Heimarmenē*, and then the relation between *Heimarmenē* and free will. For it is the interplay of these complex relations that allows Plato's *Heimarmenē* no longer to possess the supposedly constraining character of Stoic *Heimarmenē*.

4. The Relation Between Providence and Heimarmenē

The last phrase from the text by Hierocles on which we are now concentrating[ ] provides us with a succinct account of these relations, which we must elaborate:

> *Heimarmenē* reveals more clearly things [that] concerning those things that occur in accordance with the decree of providence, and it confirms the things that are [ ] [ ] and superior, with regard to the freely chosen by [illegible] of our voluntary acts.

Here and in the preceding phrase, *Heimarmenē* appears as a function subordinate to providence. The doctrine according to which *Heimarmenē* is a part of providence, that the former is contained within the lat-

[ ] The Stoic phrase [illegible] (which goes to Stoicorum veterum fragmenta, doctrine [illegible] [illegible] and therefore free will) is quoted in Aulus Gellius, Noctes Atticae, VII, XI [illegible] and Sextus Empiricus, Adversus Mathematicos, VIII, 43 [illegible] the Neoplatonists and the point of view of Boethius [illegible]

[illegible] Hierocles, [illegible] 149, p. 18[illegible], in Wachsmuth

[illegible] Calcidius, pp. 114–115

[illegible] Hierocles in Photius, *Library*, cod. 251, p. 461b25–31 Henry, vol. [illegible] 192 Henry

ter, and that everything that takes place through *Heimarmene* has providence as its first cause, is common to Hierocles and all the other Neoplatonists. It is hard to say when this doctrine originated. It seems to be sketched in the *Chaldaean Oracles*, and appears for the first time, so far as I know, in Pseudo-Plutarch. Since *Heimarmene* is included by providence, Hierocles can also speak, as Plotinus had already done, of two providences, the second of which exerts its influence upon the lower domain. The former is pure providence, the latter is none other than *Heimarmene*, or providence that exerts its influence on matter ([illegible]), and that utilizes chance (τύχη) and opportunity (καιρός). The function of the former is essentially to distribute goods and to conserve the properties appropriate to the nature of each individual, whereas the latter corrects the dispositions that are contrary

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Hierocles, in Photius, *Library*, cod. 251, p. [illegible] (Bekker, vol. VII, p. 198 Henry) [illegible]

On *Heimarmene* in the *Chaldean Oracles*, [illegible] 1978, pp. [illegible]. For Pseudo-Plutarch, [illegible]

Cf. *Enn.* III, 3, 4, [illegible] the other providence [illegible] first, and [illegible]

Hierocles, in Photius, *Library*, cod. 251, p. [illegible] (Bekker, vol. VII, p. [illegible] Henry) [illegible] and the incorporeal providence [illegible] But corporeal providence, which [illegible], is called '*Heimarmene*' because, in the fact that the sequence of events [illegible] appears more evidently in bodies."

to nature, and corrects our faults. The distinction between a pure providence and a justice-dealing providence exerting its influence within matter shows us that Hierocles, like Proclus, attributes to providence jurisdiction over the contracts of intelligible and sensible things, whereas the realm of *Heimarmenē* is limited to sensible things.[illegible] And since *Heimarmenē* is included within providence, it is also possible to speak only of one single providence. Thus, in his treatise *De decem dubitationibus*, Proclus distinguishes only rarely between providence and *Heimarmenē*, but in general deals with both under the name of providence, whereas in the treatise *De providentia et fato*, he always distinguishes *Heimarmenē* from providence, and subordinates the former to the latter. Hierocles, at the same time as he strongly emphasizes this intimate link between providence and *Heimarmenē*, speaks quite often of a providential *Heimarmenē*: προνοητικὴ εἱμαρμένη.[illegible]

According to another point of view, that of participation, Proclus is even aware of more than two providences, at different ontological levels. This is another necessary consequence of the Neoplatonic system. Starting from original providence, which functions as a cause, there are several providences that derive from this cause, and are placed successively each on a level lower than the preceding one. Among others, there is the providence of the cosmic gods, and the providence of the demons. At the last level come human souls, which are still able to exercise a certain providence, albeit very limited, upon themselves, animals, and plants.[illegible] Original providence makes beings on the immediately lower level participate in it, and it is primarily to them that its action extends; yet through mediation it extends down to the last degree. As far as human souls are concerned, it is the demons that exercise the providence closest to them; because it exerts its influence

[illegible] Proclus, *De prov.*, 14, trans. p. 12 Boese. [illegible] which is intelligible, and the other [illegible] which is sensible. [illegible] which exists [illegible] things, and the gods, things and our [illegible] which exists [illegible] things. [illegible] distinction between providence [illegible] an intelligible linked [illegible] Compare [illegible] this would [illegible] of [illegible] XIV 54–57 [illegible] XIV 73–148 [illegible] [illegible] Proclus, *In Tim.*, ed. [illegible], p. [illegible] [illegible], vol. VII, p. [illegible] Hiero., [illegible] and VII, p. [illegible] Hiero., p. [illegible] Tekker, vol. VII, p. [illegible] Hiero. [illegible] providence and of [illegible] [illegible] which [illegible] and which regulates the [illegible] *Commentaire philosophique*, IX, prise [illegible].

[illegible] Proclus, *De decem dubit.*, 1–6, 31, p. 28; Boese. For human providence, cf. 13, 14, 18, 1–22, esp. 27; 33 Boese.

within matter, this providence is a part of *Heimarmenē*.[illegible] Thus, the Neoplatonists can equally well speak of one unique providence, or of several partial providences, as they can of providence and of *Heimarmenē*. In all three cases, these are three particular aspects of the same system, which, rather than excluding one another, mutually imply one another.[illegible]

Hierocles calls *Heimarmenē* "the justice-dealing actions of god." In Neoplatonists like Simplicius, who, as a result of the progressive diversification of hypostases, distinguish between *Dikē* and *Heimarmenē*, it thus happens that it is *Dikē* who is called "the punitive form of divine justice-dealing activity."[illegible] *Dikē* thus seems to be intercalated between providence and *Heimarmenē*. Yet we must always remember that *Dikē* and *Heimarmenē* are mere aspects of providence, which was, according to the laws inherent in the Neoplatonic system, sometimes be confused with providence, and sometimes be distinguished from it.

[illegible] Hierocles, in Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 251, p. [illegible] Bekker; see Wilpert 1914 Hiero[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

according to a hierarchical order. This has no effect upon the substance of the question.

Additionally, Hermeias defines *Hermarmenē* as the divine will (θεία βουλήσις), the law of God's justice (νόμος τῆς θείας δικαιοσύνης), and elsewhere as divine judgement (κρίσις θεία).[illegible] It is difficult to distinguish the law decreed by the demiurge and the executive of this law. It was an old habit of the Platonists to call Fatality a law, the demiurge *Nomos* the legislator. We find parallel expressions in pseudo-Plutarch, Porphyry, and Calcidius.[illegible] Ultimately, they are based on *Timaeus*, 41e2, where the demiurge announces the "fatal laws" (νόμους τοὺς εἱμαρμένους) to the souls.

4. Hermarmenē, Contingency, Free Will

The character of this law is hypothetical, as is the case for every law.[illegible] It only fixes general rules of the following kind: "If you do this, you will

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

have such-and-such a punishment or reward," but it does not order "Do this!" and it is constraining only with regard to the consequences of our voluntary actions. It is up to our free will to make a choice; however, the consequences of this choice no longer belong to our free will, but will be imposed upon us. The choice we have made is thus the preliminary condition for the functioning of *Heimarmenē*. It precedes the necessary sequence of inevitable consequences that follows our choice and in which *Heimarmenē* consists. This is the meaning of the brief phrase from Hierocles we cited earlier: "It corrects what we do, as a function of the freely chosen hypotheses which are our acts." In the *De fato* of Pseudo-Plutarch, we find a rather elaborate exposition of the doctrine that *Heimarmenē* functions ἐξ ὑποθέσεως.

The origin of the distinction between absolute necessity, which applies only to eternal beings, and conditional necessity ἐξ ὑποθέσεως, which exercises its influence upon all the beings subject to becoming, goes back to Aristotle. When applied to *Heimarmenē*, this formulation does not seem to be attested in the later Neoplatonists; yet with regard to its substance, this doctrine is omnipresent in them, as the rest of our investigation will show.

Fatality does not strike mankind blindly, but acts in accordance with merit. It is simultaneously the result of man's free choice and of the providence of the demiurge, so that, as Hierocles says, once we have freely chosen what we want, we must often, as a consequence of this choice, undergo what we do not want. In Proclus, we find the same interweaving between providence, *Heimarmenē*, and man's free will, ob-

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The comparison of *Heimarmenē* with [illegible] law is found in Porphyry, *On What Depends on Us*, in Stobaeus, *Ecl.* II, 8, 42, p. 169, [illegible] Wachsmuth, and Pseudo-Plutarch, *De fato*, [illegible] Köhler.

Pseudo-Plutarch, *De fato*, [illegible]

Cf. Aristotle, *De partibus animalium*, [illegible]

Hierocles, in Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 251, [illegible] Bekker (= vol. VII, p. [illegible] Henry): "And this is *Heimarmenē*, [illegible] we have chosen what we want [illegible] what we do not want, because of the judgement which [illegible]"

rained thanks to a learned combination of several texts from Plato, as he shows us clearly.[illegible] Punishments, which are the consequence of the actions or intentions which it was in our power to commit or not to commit, are themselves situated within the domain of things that are not in our power, like the body and external possessions.[illegible] They are thus manifested as illnesses, or as the loss of possessions, or in other forms, for we must recall[illegible] that *Heimarmenē* exercises its influence within matter, and has no power over the rational soul itself,[illegible] by

[illegible]

which man is defined,[illegible] and which, by essence, is moved by itself (αὐτοκίνητος). It exercises power on the soul only if the latter is too closely united to matter: that is, if it allows itself to sympathize with the body and thus, in a way, becomes moved by something else (ἑτεροκίνητος).[illegible] This is an essential doctrinal element, which we find in all the late Neoplatonists.

> We suffer in our bodies and in external things, says Hermias, what has been decreed by that justice that watches over us. For it is the aggravation and the respite that occur in the things around us,[illegible] as well as their multiple modifications, that instruct the soul's free will to act in a healthy manner, which happens fairly quickly if it greets the trials which happen to it with constancy. If, however, its behavior in the face of these trials is imprudent and senseless, this will happen only after numerous and long detours. For it is then that it

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[illegible] Cf. Hermias, *In Platonis Phaedrum*, XIII, [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Hermias [illegible]

[illegible] A paraphrasing of the last quotation from Proclus in the preceding note.

> incurs punishments not as thoughtlessness; nevertheless, it is still led, through its offerings, towards its duty.[1]

As Hierocles explains at length in his commentary on verses 67–69 of the *Carmen aureum*, the soul's duty is clearly to remember its origin and its essence, and to extricate itself from all sympathy with material things; that is, with its body and with external possessions.[2] Providence, *Dikē*, or *Heimarmenē* thus acts like a doctor toward his patients: just as the latter cures bodies by the administration of medical treatments and remedies, so *Heimarmenē* cures souls by appropriate measures. The use of this analogy is once again common to all the Neoplatonists.[3]

6. *The Reunion between Heimarmenē and Dikē*

In the previous section, we have seen Hierocles use the comparison of *Heimarmenē* to a doctor and his use of medical science. He now adds a third term to his analogy, that of judges:

> The judgement of the judges who keep watch over us resembles medical science.[4]

He thus assimilates these judges to *Heimarmenē*. Other texts from the summary by Photius will reveal to us who these judges are.

> "Moreover," says Hierocles, "a normal for our acts shown here to the beings who have transcended the middle domain, for they are our

[1] Hierocles, in Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 251, p. 460a19–20 (Henry, vol. XII, p. 176): Photius.

[2] Cf. Simplicius, in *Carmen aureum*, XIV (ed. Hadot [1996], p. XIV; [2001], Hadot [2011], vol. I, p. 30, 24–31; Kahn: "Therefore, he has, [illegible] which consists in the possibility of indirect [illegible] and the exercise of self-determination [illegible]").

[3] Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads*, I, 2 (ed. Armstrong, Henry and Schwyzer, vol. VIII, p. 169): "For [illegible] bring mistreatment to souls, [illegible] the Soul's happiness, for it is [illegible] on the [illegible] principle, [illegible] indigence [illegible] judges who keep watch over us resemble medical science, which [illegible] those who have fallen ill by their own fault, and which, if it [illegible] everything then will be adequate [illegible]." Cf. Hierocles, in *Carmen aureum*, XIV, p. 65, Doll; Schiller; cf. Porphyry, *Letter to Marcella*, 31, 1991, p. 51 Bouffartigue: "It is obvious that the [illegible] with most assistance of all medical arts." Cf. Plato, *Gorgias*, 464b: "[illegible] the art of caring [illegible]." Cf. Simplicius, *De anima*, I, 2, 1, the reference cited above, p. 194.

[4] Cf. preceding note.

> guardians and they watch over us. All their actions with regard to us is called *Heimarmene*, and it arranges our affairs according to the laws of justice."[xx]

That the "beings who have been allotted the middle domain" are the demons, is confirmed by the following text:[xxi]

> "The soul," says Hercules, "whose impulse towards any choice whatsoever it may be is dominant and consequently worthy of being guided by the superior kind that is closest to it, and always finds the process, the purification, or the possession of Reason despite serious dangers. The choice depends on us, but what results from this choice is determined by the judgment of prudence, which situates the soul's disposition according to its nature. And thus it is said that we choose, and at the same time obtain its lot, our and the same forms of life."[xxii]

The "superior kind" closest to the rational human soul is thus the intermediate class of souls—that is, the class of demons—which, in accordance with a long tradition, is closely associated with *Heimarmene*.[xxiii] The last phrase of the second quotation alludes to the famous relief of Lachesis in the myth of Er, which announces the drawing of lots and the choice of forms of life and of their demons for the souls destined for a new incorporation:

> Ephemeral souls! This is the beginning of another cycle of mortality for the mortal race. Not a demon shall obtain you by lot, but you shall choose a demon. Let he who has drawn the first lot be the first to choose a form of life to which he will be linked by necessity. Virtue has no master, and it will belong to each of you to honor it to a greater or lesser degree. That is God's fault, not ours. Responsibility falls upon him who chooses, but God is not responsible.[xxiv]

A bit further on, Plato adds:[xxv]

> In one case, when all the souls had chosen their form of life, mainstanding the rank that this had drawn by lot, they advanced in order

[xx] Hercules, in Photius, *Lexicon*, cod. 249, p. 438a 1991 Bekker, vol. VII, p. 194 Henry.

[xxi] Hercules, in Photius, *Lexicon*, cod. 249, p. 438a 1991 Bekker, vol. VII, p. 194 Henry.

[xxii] Hercules, p. 112 [illegible] 391.

[xxiii] Plato, *Republic*, X, 617d-618.

[xxiv] *Ibid.*, X, 620d-e, 617.

> before Lachesis. She gave to each one as a companion the demon he had chosen, as guardian of his form of life, and fulfiller of the things that have been chosen.

As we have seen, Hierocles clearly alludes to these guardian demons. In the following text, however, Hierocles' formulations are even closer to the text of Plato:

> As for us, it is by the verdict of our judges the demons, that we obtain by lot, in accordance with what we have deserved in the course of our previous existences, a life in which everything is included: race, city, father, mother, moment of birth, bodily qualities, upsets and chances of fortune that are appropriate to the life (which one has chosen), [illegible] and time of our death; and the guardian of all these things and fulfiller is the demon who has obtained us by lot.

In this last text, the "demon chosen by the soul" mentioned in the myth of Er is assimilated to the "demon who has obtained us by lot" alluded to in the *Phaedo*. Plotinus had already tried to reconcile these two contradictory texts, whereas Proclus, probably basing himself on them, had distinguished two groups of demons who watch over souls.

See above, pp. 118–119, [illegible] 411–412.

This [illegible] the circumstances [illegible] proper to the form of life one has chosen. [illegible]

Hierocles, [illegible] Photius, *Library*, cod. 251, [illegible] (Bekker), vol. VII, p. 205 Henry.

Compare Hierocles in Photius, *Library*, [illegible] (Bekker), vol. VII, p. 203 Henry: [illegible] guardian and executor of all these things [illegible]

Cf. Plotinus' treatise entitled "On the Demon Who Has Received Us by Lot" (*Enn.* III, 4).

Cf. Proclus, *In Remp.*, vol. II, p. 271, [illegible] Kroll, [illegible] Thus, there are also demons [illegible] as guardians of the souls [illegible] They are accustomed to call them "angels," contrasting them with

The attribution of the function of judges to the demons is based on the myth of the *Gorgias*. As is well known, this myth is centered around the *post-mortem* judgment of souls, and the need for every soul to undergo punishments for the faults it has committed during life on earth. The fundamental Neoplatonic law, also stated by Hierocles,[illegible] according to which each class of beings produces the class of beings which comes immediately after it in the hierarchy, and exercises providence over it, brings it about that the function of judges with regard to us falls to the lot of the class of demons, which is the closest class of souls, situated immediately above human souls.

In the Neoplatonic interpretation of the myth of Er, we always encounter the same learned combination and reconciliation of Providence–*Heimarmenē* with human free will that Hierocles formulated in his definition of *Heimarmenē*, and that inspires the three passages mentioned concerning the role of demons with regard to us. The following text by Proclus gives us an excellent example:[illegible]

> The lot is thus twofold, one prior to choice, and the other posterior. One is the sum total of the types of existence, and of this lot each type is a part, and the other is the sum total of the accidental elements which the Cosmos assigns as direct consequences to a given type. Each of these two lots comes from the Moirai, but the soul's choice intervenes between the two, and thus, on the one hand, the autonomous movement of free will is maintained, and on the other the rules of Justice are preserved, which assign to souls the recompense due to them. . . .[illegible]

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the divine demons that preside there, and which attach the souls' temporal being [illegible], to the gods who lead them. And it seems to me [illegible] rather that the Prophet has not attached the lots to the souls. [illegible] therefore, manifesting the difference between these [illegible] [illegible] [that] the demon linked to [illegible] [illegible]. Furthermore, the choice of a demon [illegible] the souls. In the case of the former, we [illegible] rather than we should submit, in the case of the latter, we choose to live [illegible] in order that we might be ruled. [illegible] Thus, even if we are [illegible] of the demon, it is no longer true that [illegible] before we chose, we are not under his jurisdiction. Once we have chosen the [illegible] by him, however, we come under his rule.

[illegible] Hierocles, in Photius, *Library*, cod. 251, p. 463b30ff. Bekker, vol. VII, p. 192 Henry.

[illegible] Proclus, *In Remp. publ.*, vol. II, p. 264, 8ff. Kroll, trans. based on that by Festugière, 1970, 3.222ff.

[illegible] Cf. Simplicius, *In Epict. Ench.*, [illegible] (Hadot 1996 [illegible] = 1999 Hadot (2001)).

The technical terms *apotheosis* and *apotheosis* that the Neoplatonists, and Hierocles himself, often use in this context, appear for the first time, as far as I know, in Porphyry.[1]

The Limits of the Will

If *Heimarmenē* exerts its influence on the external and physical conditions of our life—that is, if the demons ensure the complete accomplishment of all the elements included in the lot that *Heimarmenē* assigns to us as a consequence of our choice—it is therefore *Heimarmenē* that settles almost all the external details of our life. Our free will must therefore have no influence upon such details, except in those cases when we have the impression that we can choose between several possibilities. This is affirmed by Hierocles, as well as by Proclus and Simplicius.

> "Our power of determination," says Hierocles, "is not such that it can, by its voluntary movements, change all things and all their properties. Rather, it works, according to each individual, in such a way that what would have been produced, and whether or not the moment of life, since we do not all want the same things, but if they were active and consequently, the dispositions of each person would turn all things upside down, and rules would be modified by the rapid changes of human choices. This is why it is appropriate that the power of human beings, outside independent, is completely incapable of producing or establishing anything without some longer-term cooperation from outside. [...] [Local] human [...] has no power over anything other than itself, and over the possibilities of improving or degrading itself by its behavior, it can only judge what which is, and greet what happens, and thus acquire a vision of [...] through the good or bad dispositions of its subjects on its own terms. Indeed, the power of determination is [...] the only thing that depends on us is to [illegible] the pleasures without the body in which we are clothed, not external things falling within the domain of this power of determination."[2]

[1] Cf. Porphyry, [illegible] *Sententiae*, [illegible], II, 8, 30, p. 1[illegible], 23 [illegible] 26, 27 [illegible] *Sententiae*, p. 168, 23 [illegible] Porphyry [illegible] Mayer, Stuttgart 1[illegible] Philosophie, Company [illegible] p. 364-2[illegible] Bekker, vol. VII, p. 1[illegible] Hiero[illegible] *Sententiae*, [illegible].

[2] Hierocles, in Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 251, p. 46[illegible] Bekker, vol. VII, p. 2[illegible] Hiero[illegible].

This is exactly what Simplicius explains at length in his exposition on "What depends on us," and what Proclus also affirms.[illegible] Yet this, I repeat, does not mean that *Heimarmenē* settles absolutely all the external details of our lives. In particular, we always have the possibility of a true choice when we have the impression, which is by no means illusory, that we are faced by an alternative. The faculty of choice and deliberation has not been given to us in vain.[illegible] With regard to the results of our actions in the area of external things, they depend to a large extent on our cooperation and the effort we make, although we are not the only masters of these actions.[illegible] Besides, the practice of oracles and of the hieratic art proves the existence of the contingent.[illegible]

5. Conclusion

Basing myself on parallel texts, mostly taken from Proclus and cited above all in the notes, I hope to have been able to demonstrate that Hierocles' doctrine on providence and *Heimarmenē*, with regard to those of its elements that we can still grasp, coincides with those of the Late Neoplatonists. The thesis of K. Praechter, according to which "Hierocles scarcely goes beyond pre-Plotinian Platonism"[illegible] and, in contrast to the Athenian Neoplatonists, had undergone Christian influence, therefore loses its credibility, and all the crudite hypotheses constructed thereupon collapse along with it.[illegible] However, this result of our research does not authorize us to affirm that Hierocles' doctrine on providence, which the state of his work allows us to know only insufficiently, was, in all its details, the same as that of Simplicius, for example, who does not entirely set forth his complete doctrine on this subject either. We are, however, in a position to say that if changes did occur between Hierocles and Simplicius, as is probable, in view of the overall development of Neoplatonism, they can concern only minor details in the supplementary subdivisions of the hierarchy, in its broad outlines—that is to say, with regard to the subsumption of *Heimarmenē*

[illegible] Proclus, *De prov.*, 53, 1-6, p. 143 Boese. [illegible]

[illegible] Cf. Proclus, *De prov.*, 17-30, pp. 144-147 Boese. [illegible]

[illegible] Cf. Simplicius, *In Epict.* [illegible] 482, 40-483, 11 Hadot (1996) = 6,19-6,24 Hadot (2001). [illegible] Cf. Proclus, *De prov.*, 36, pp. 144-147, 51-65, p. 164 Boese.

[illegible] Cf. Proclus, *De prov.*, 17-30, pp. [illegible] Boese.

[illegible] Cf. Praechter, 1926, p. 142.

[illegible] For example, H. Kubitschek, 1877; N. Agnostopoulos, 1938.

to providence, the compatibility of divine providence with contingency and free will,[1] the function of *Hermarmene* as renderer of justice for our acts, accomplished both in this life and in a previous life, the Neoplatonic doctrine of providence remained unchanged from Porphyry down to Damascius and Simplicius.

Our research on Hierocles has therefore shown that the fragments known to us of Hierocles' doctrine are characteristic and integral parts of that Neoplatonism that is called "Athenian." In the preceding chapters, we have seen this with regard to the history of philosophy and the notions of matter and the demiurge. In the present chapter, we have been able to confirm that the features of Hierocles' doctrine on Providence, alleged to be archaic, Middle-Platonist, or "Christian," are found in Iamblichus or Proclus. The result of our research is thus that we must not doubt Hierocles' affirmation when he declares that his own philosophical views received their orientation from Plutarch of Athens, who, we might add, had undergone the influence of Iamblichus.[2] We therefore note that neither Hierocles nor Simplicius may be claimed as witness of the doctrinal originality of Neoplatonism as taught at Alexandria. I will go still further: such a doctrinal originality never existed.[3] How, moreover, could it have existed, given that the same philosophers studied and taught both in Athens and in Alexandria, maintaining a constant exchange of ideas between them? We need only read the Introduction by Saffrey and Westerink to their edition of Proclus' *Platonic Theology*[4] and the *Life of Isidorus* by Damascius in order to be struck by the continuous coming and going that took place between the two schools. It is true that local political conditions may sometimes have menaced the freedom of instruction at Alexandria, as was also the case at Athens, which Proclus was once forced to flee;[5] yet this fact did not place the philosophical orientation of the school in jeopardy. It was chance that brought it about that we possess almost exclusively commentaries on the writings of Plato from the Athenian school, and commentaries on Aristotle from the Alexandrian school. Yet in both places the explanation of both authors was practiced, in conformity with the order of studies. The differences that have been discerned between these Platonic and Aristotelian commentaries are due

[1] On the position of the Neoplatonists, which they themselves considered intermediate between that of the Peripatetics and that of the Stoics, see the excellent article by F. Bossier, 1975. However, the Neoplatonists' opinion with regard to the Stoics is not justified. [illegible]

[2] Cf. [illegible], 29–33.

[3] Cf. I. Hadot, 1984, pp. 177–192 of the conclusion; Hadot 1984; Hadot 2004a, pp. XIX–[illegible]; Westerink, 1990.

[4] Proclus, *Platonic Theology*, vol. I, pp. [illegible].

[5] Marinus, *Life of Proclus*, XV.

to a large extent to the internal demands of the subject dealt with, and not to divergences in philosophical tendencies. Perhaps, as a result of mutual polemics, there was an influence from Christianity on Neoplatonism—I shall leave this question to be decided by others[22]—but if this were the case, neither Simplicius nor Hermeias underwent it to a more noticeable extent than, for instance, Proclus or Damascius. The doctrinal evolution of Neoplatonism took place homogeneously.

[22] For a negative judgment on this subject, cf. P. Hadot, 1972, pp. 1-9[illegible]

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GRETCHEN REYDAMS-SCHILS
Program of Liberal Studies
University of Notre Dame

Examining the work of Hierocles in his philosophic context, Hadot presents a clear picture of the issues that were critically important for Neoplatonic thinkers in the fourth and fifth centuries and earlier. She leads the reader through the labyrinth of the Neoplatonists' metaphysics by focusing on the place and function of the Demiurge in their respective systems of thought. Through the lens of Hadot's analysis, the seemingly endless and often confusing elaboration of ontological levels becomes defined; it all suddenly "makes sense" as she explains the activity of the Demiurge against the background of Pythagorean images, thus placing the reader in the same vision that held the Neoplatonists.

GREGORY SHAW
Department of Religious Studies
Stonehill College

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